

LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

AUGUST 1891.

The Mischief of Monica.

BY L. B. WALFORD.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

'IT WASN'T VERY PLEASANT TO HEAR THEM!'

Such little wasps! And yet so full of spite!
For bulk mere insects—yet in mischief strong.—TATE.

'WELL, she was a pretty creature, I will say that of Monica Lavenham.'

Mrs. George Schofield sat and sighed in her easy chair the day after Flodden Hall had been deserted. 'No wonder poor cousin Joseph was so set upon her,' continued she, after a pause. 'She was enough to turn the head of any man. Oh, George,' as her son entered, 'I was talking to Daisy here about the Lavenham girls; have you heard about them? They're off, you know. Off last night, bag and baggage. Daisy has had a letter from Monica—a really nice, affectionate letter—written just before they started, and posted in London on their arrival there late last night. It must have been posted at the station. We sent for our letters this afternoon; and lucky we did, or we should have heard nothing till to-morrow, and people might have been talking to us, and we not knowing—but, however, no one has been here. I daresay you may have heard, though?' as he betrayed no surprise.

'I heard,' he said, succinctly, and came and stood in front of the fire.

'Well, as I was saying to Daisy,' proceeded his mother, with whom this was a favourite formula, 'that Monica was a pretty creature. To see her fly up into her saddle was a sight in itself; and though I did feel that perhaps poor cousin Joseph made more fuss about the two of them than he need have done—like princesses of the blood royal, I am sure they were kept,—but, however, 'tis ill speaking harm of the dead,—and to be sure they were his own sister's only children,—and anyhow he has left them nothing.'

No response. George stood still upon the hearthrug. He had not even taken off his hat or great-coat, and his newspapers and stick were in his hand. His mother, observing him, thought that George looked tired. Daisy, it must be confessed, thought only that his hat was stuck on the back of his head, and that she had often wished he would not stick it there when Dorrien was by. She had become painfully alive to her eldest brother's deficiencies, and often marvelled how it seemed he was himself so little aware of them. To come straight into his mother's drawing-room, hatted, gloved, and great-coated, with strong, dirty boots that left their marks upon everything with which they came in contact! To stand stupidly stock-still, taking no notice of his mother, nor of herself; to be full of his own tiresome affairs, as he always was; to be caring about those of no one else, as he never did; to be listening to nobody, responding to nothing! She got up and left the room, out of patience with such surly, selfish doltishness.

As soon as she was gone, George moved a pace nearer to his mother.

'Do you know what they say about Dorrien?' he began abruptly.

Mrs. Schofield started. Daisy had desired her to know nothing about Dorrien. She and Daisy had had a talk together on the subject, and come to an understanding at last. Neither however had taken George into account.

'They say that he—and Monica——,' and the young man stopped, as if he had said enough.

'Oh, he and Monica,' rejoined his mother, feebly. ('Dear me! I wish Daisy would come in again,' with some internal perturbation.) 'Well, what about him and Monica?' proceeded she, after a momentary hesitation.

'Lionel Carnforth told me. Mother, did you know?' and she was subjected to a glance so searching that her discomfiture was at once penetrated.

'Well, yes, I knew; that is to say, I knew in a kind of way, George': Mrs. Schofield shuffled in her chair: 'I knew that there was something,—and, at any rate, I knew that Daisy——,'

—'I thought he was on with Daisy,' burst forth her son. 'I was told so; you said so; everybody made out that it was so. He used to be over here every day of the week, and I was bidden to get out of the way. Daisy used to try to keep me indoors when I came out in the evening, and all. If he was after Daisy, how could he be after—anyone else?' jerking off one of the mantel-piece ornaments with a sudden movement.

'Goodness gracious! George, what are you doing? Lucky for you that I was here. It would have broken all to pieces if I had not caught it,' cried his mother, replacing the piece of china which had fallen into her lap. 'That stick of yours——,'

—'Never mind—never mind.' He threw it down impatiently, and tossed his hat after it. 'Tell me the truth about this business, will you? Is Dorrien to marry Daisy or——?' and he looked the rest.

'It is all at an end between him and Daisy,' replied Mrs. Schofield with emphasis and a suitably lowered tone; 'and between you and me, George, I am not sorry for it. I had begun to feel squeamish about the Dorrien connection. Ever since that day we were over at Cullingdon, when I fancied a change in the young man's manner. And what is more, I fancied it in Daisy's manner too. She as good as confessed to me just now that I was right. She says she would rather keep close about it, and I am not to question her; but it is over and done with, and that's all about it. Of course I can say no more,—and indeed I want to say no more. There is as good as he to be had any day, and Daisy has always her grandfather's money. I can't deny that I was pleased at first, and would have liked a girl of mine to be 'my lady' well enough; but, George, that place of theirs is in dreadful need of repair; and I do assure you, George, I can't but think that Sir Arthur and his lady would never have been so civil as they were to me and mine, but that they thought so too.'

'All of this is nothing,' said he, frowning; 'it is not what I want to know. I——,'

—'Why, it is just what you asked me about, my dear! You said these very words, "Is he on with Daisy?" or something of the kind. You would not have been best pleased if you had been kept in the dark.'

'I have been kept in the dark—that is just what I have been.'

You never gave me so much as a hint of this before. If you had, I should have known what to think. Dorrien begins to play the fool with Daisy about the very time that Monica Lavenham appears on the scene. What does that mean?’

‘Well, you know, George, she was a pretty creature. But to be sure Daisy is a pretty creature too. Only I suppose——’

‘Oh! you “suppose?” Do you *know* anything? Had you heard anything?’

‘Heard? No. What should I have heard?’

His hand again roved among the china ornaments. She began to wonder at this restlessness, this impatience. Usually George was sulky and silent when out of humour. She could see that he was out of humour now, but it was not sulkiness which clouded his brow, nor did he appear disposed for taciturnity. (‘Something has gone wrong with him,’ she concluded. ‘Dear me! Poor George! Now, I wonder what it can be that has gone wrong with him?’) ‘Just tell me what you are in trouble about, my dear laddie,’ she was beginning, but she got no further.

‘Who said I was “in trouble”? I am not “in trouble.” I don’t know what you mean by my being “in trouble,” he cried angrily. ‘I ask a simple question, and can get no answer; and then you begin about my being “in trouble”!’

‘Well, I’m sure, George—but I don’t understand you. I thought you looked vexed and out of spirits, and you keep worrying and worrying round those shepherdess figures. I wish you would let them alone—they will be broken as sure as can be; and you snap me up as short as anything because I give you a kind word!’ The maternal accents ended in being aggrieved and reproachful.

‘But I don’t want a kind word, and what I do want is an answer,’ persisted he. ‘You beat about the bush, and tell me this thing and that, and the one thing I want to know is, what is the truth about Dorrien?’

‘About Dorrien?’

‘And—and Monica? They went away together last night, do you know?’

‘No?’ She started from her chair.

‘Mind you, I have only Lionel Carnforth’s word for it, and he is the biggest liar going, as everyone knows. But he swore solemnly that he had met another fellow in the morning who had seen them;—so I suppose there must be something in it. They crossed to Birkenhead—crossed in that awful fog last night—and

went on to London by the next train. Carnforth swore that it was a fact, and—and added a lot besides.'

'Well, I wouldn't have believed it of Monica!' ejaculated his mother.

'Nor would I—but —,' said George gloomily, and paused.

'But what?'

'I came out with young Smith, who goes to the Carnforths sometimes; and he and Lionel were saying things to each other. It wasn't very pleasant to hear them.'

'Lawks! what did they say, George?' It was not in human nature not to sit up on the edge of the chair at this. Consumed with curiosity, Mrs. Schofield's very capstrings betrayed the feeling.

'They said—I wish you had been there instead of me; perhaps you would have liked it better—they said a great deal that I could have knocked down their throats again; and the worst of it was that they appeared to take it for granted that I knew as much as they did.'

'But what was it about, George?' still very curious.

'About? This fine gentleman of Daisy's and—and the girl who has supplanted her. It was Monica Lavenham who took Dorrien away from Daisy. She—he—it appears everyone knew it and talked of it—everyone but ourselves. They say that one time they met—it was the evening before cousin Joseph died—it was at the Carnforths'—Smith was there—it was about that evening that he and Lionel Carnforth were talking, when he swallowed something in his throat, and kicked a footstool aside savagely.'

'About Monica and Mr. Dorrien?'

'Yes. Monica and Mr. Dorrien. Mother, if you had known anything of this, you might have told me.'

She looked up in amazement at the words, and a terrible idea all at once occurred to her.

'Have told him? *Him*? Why have told *him*? What was it to George? It had been of Daisy she had had to think. No one had ever supposed—how should anyone have supposed that this unfortunately crossed love affair could be anything to Daisy's brother? He how never liked Dorrien, and would be more than acquiescent in the cessation of Dorrien's visits—he might have seen for himself that the end had come. Why then should he now turn on anyone and complain that he had not been told?'

All of this she could have explained and demonstrated but for one thing—the tone of her son's voice. It was thick and husky, the utterance of one struggling with suppressed feeling; and

when, arrested by this, she had her attention drawn to his air, his countenance, his attitude, she began to perceive the truth. The truth was so dreadful to her that she was literally shocked into silence. She was thankful that, Daisy coming in, George went out, and the colloquy was at an end.

Mrs. Schofield beckoned her daughter to the side of her chair.

'Daisy,' she whispered—then peering round and round to make sure no one else was in the room—'Daisy, I don't know but that I'm wrong—but if I'm right I—oh! don't come to do the room yet, Charlotte,' as a housemaid entered; 'just wait five minutes, and I'll be gone upstairs. Has the gong sounded? Well, I did not hear it. We'll go directly,' waiting till the door closed again. Then once more, holding fast her daughter's arm, and screening her mouth with the other hand—

'Daisy, did George love Monica?' Monica's name was almost inaudible.

'Oh! I knew that long ago,' said Daisy, readily.

'You knew it, and never told me! The poor boy!'

'It was a ridiculous idea!' said Daisy, who was now to prove herself a woman and a sister. 'It was really too absurd of George. He never spoke to her—she never spoke to him,—or at least if she did, it was only to laugh at him and make game of him. It used to put me out to see them together, and I could not think how George could be so foolish.'

'Well! Foolish? If Monica Lavenham was good enough for Mr. Dorrien, I don't see how you can call George foolish.'

'My dear mother! It was not she who was not good enough.' Daisy laughed aloud. 'I should never blame any man where Monica was concerned. But to think of *George!*'

'Well, George—why not George? George is as good as other people, I suppose,' rejoined George's mother, with very natural asperity. 'I am sure I don't know what you mean by looking like that, and saying "*George!*" in that tone of voice. I am sure I for one am very sorry for poor George, if it is so,' subsiding into a sigh; 'and if you had seen him just now, fretting and fidgeting from one leg to another, and glooming at me as if I had been to blame for it all, you would have been sorry too.'

'Oh! well; but after all,' protested Daisy, who, clear-sighted and noble-minded about her own love-story, had, it must be confessed, but scant sympathy with what seemed to her nothing short of a parody upon it; 'after all, he ought never to have thought of such a thing. He might have known—as if Monica would ever have looked at him, have dreamed of him! *George!*' And

a vision of George with his umbrella, his newspapers, his hat on the back of his head, and his pale, dull face beneath—George stumping home at the close of his day's work, with soiled collar and cuffs, with not infrequently railway smuts on cheek and chin (smuts had a knack of adhering to George's face; he had not the cool, fine skin of Dorrien)—all of this rising before the speaker's eye as she spoke, made the unfortunate subject of her cogitations form such a contrast to the brilliant Monica, that in spite of herself she once more ejaculated the obnoxious word in the obnoxious accent before she was aware.

'For goodness' sake, don't repeat that again!' cried Mrs. Schofield, who, between son and daughter, had had about as much as she could stand, already. 'I never heard the like of it! A sister to speak like that of a brother! Fie upon you! say I, not to stand by your own, let who will be the other. I am sure I would not breathe a whisper against any one of the seven of you; but you seem to take a pleasure in be-littling us all now-a-days. "George," indeed!' fanning her heated face with a newspaper, and jerking her chin indignantly about.

Daisy had seldom seen her mother moved to a like extent.

Some daughters would have caressed away the frown; but the Schofield family were not demonstrative. It was not their way to speak softly, nor to move gently. It was only once or twice in a lifetime that the real warmth within could emerge into tenderness without. Daisy had been tender, exquisitely tender, and gentle, and dignified in the great trial of her life, but in everyday matters she was still the same Daisy that she had ever been. Accordingly she replied to the above, I am sorry to record, with a brisk 'Nonsense!' and, though secretly a little ashamed, made a pretence of being absolutely unaware of having said or done anything to be ashamed of.

'There you go! "Nonsense!"' rejoined Mrs. Schofield. 'It is no "Nonsense" to him, I can tell you. I call it downright unfeeling of you, Daisy. One would think that *you*, at any rate—'

—'Now do listen to reason, mother.' Daisy spoke a little hurriedly, having no desire to see the conversation take the turn obviously impending. 'Do just think of it for yourself. George, at his age—'

—'How old is she, pray?'

'That is nothing. Women are always older than men. And as for Monica, she is years and years older than George in everything *but* years. She thinks of him as a mere boy—if she thinks of him at all. He has never made the smallest attempt to show

himself as anything else. A mere boy, and sometimes a very rude boy. He was often particularly disagreeable when the Lavenhams were by. I used to wonder what made him so.'

'And yet you say you knew about his caring for Monica long ago?'

'I found it out, somehow. I am sure I hardly know how.'

She paused. On a sudden it flashed upon her that she had known because of certain signs perceptible only to certain eyes, because of answering echoes to these within her own breast.

'But Monica did not even like George,' continued Daisy, eagerly. 'You know he is not the sort of man she has been accustomed to. George is very good in his way; and of course *we* understand him and are fond of him,—but to strangers and visitors he never shows off well. He is tiresome, and stupid, and mopish. He never throws himself into what is going on, nor takes any interest in what other people are doing. It is always "Let me go my own way" with him. He never cares about making himself look nice, but is just as dowdy when people are with us as when we are alone, and says that it "does not matter," and that he is "well enough." I have tried over and over again to make him better. He says he does not want to be better. He won't even try to improve. He only grows cross and sullen if I begin to speak about it.'

'I daresay. No young man likes to be lectured.' Mrs. Schofield could listen no longer. 'If that is all the comfort you have got to give poor George, I must say I don't wonder that he flies out at us all. He might have expected a little sisterly feeling from *you*, Daisy.'

Daisy coloured. There was no parrying this second home-thrust.

'Was it this he was talking to you about when I came in?' she enquired, after a silence during which Mrs. Schofield's kind heart was already repentant.

'Yes, poor dear! Daisy, I am sorry I said that. For after all, Daisy, you are a good girl, and have had your own trials; but when I think that things have gone cross with both of you——,' and tears stood in her honest eyes.

Daisy said nothing.

'That was what he was telling me, and hard work he had to get it out at last,' continued her mother, in a sort of husky whisper. 'I am sure I thought we were never going to get to the point—and to be sure, we never did quite get to it; but the

way in which he said, "*You might have told me,*" shaking his head from side to side—oh, dear! oh, dear! it fairly cut me to the heart.'

'What was it that you "might have told" him

'About Monica and Mr. Dorrien, of course.'

'Do you mean that he had never "told" himself? That he had never seen anything for himself?'

'Oh! I am sure he had never seen anything.'

'Then he is a—— who *had* told him, then? How had he found out, if he had not the wit to find out for himself?'

'Lionel Carnforth and the other young men were talking. And oh! I forgot. You have not heard the last thing, Daisy. They do say that Mr. Dorrien went off to London with the two girls, yesterday. He was seen to cross to Birkenhead in their boat, and afterwards he was with them in the station. No doubt they went all the way together. Not a word of this did Miss Monica say in her letter, though. Now I did not think Monica was sly, whatever she was.'

'The letter she wrote to me was written before they started,' said Daisy.

'Aye, to be sure; but they had engaged to meet him then.'

'That I am sure they had not.'

'Well, Lionel Carnforth said so.'

'Lionel Carnforth!' repeated Daisy, with contempt. It was noticeable that everyone naming the name of Carnforth invariably did so with the same intonation.

'Oh! but there was another of George's friends, a young Smith—you know, old Tom Smith's son—he goes to the Carnforths', and he had been at that dinner-party—*you know?*'

Daisy nodded.

'And he gave such an account of it. I could see by George's face what an account of it he had given.'

'Mother'—it was another Daisy who now spoke—'mother, we need not go into that old matter. It is past and done with. Monica and Mr. Dorrien are parted now, and parted for ever. If Monica ever injured me, ever did me any wrong, ever——'—she bit her lip—'I forgive her from my heart,' she subjoined, after a moment's pause. 'She is—she has been bitterly punished; but I forgave her even when I did not expect any punishment. She did not know what she was doing. She——'

—'She knew well enough she was behaving badly to poor George, anyway.'

‘But what I do not believe, and what I never will believe, unless I hear it from her own lips,’ proceeded Daisy, wrapped in her own train of thought, ‘is that yesterday’s was a premeditated meeting. I know she did not mean to see him—I know he did not wish to see her. Since there can be no marriage, they are better apart; and a strange, almost clandestine appointment—Monica would never have stooped to it. She could have seen him openly any day, if it had been only to say “Good-bye.” Why should she not? But she thought it best not. They must forget each other now.’

She stopped abruptly.

‘Ah! well, it has been a bad business all through,’ concluded Mrs. Schofield, rising heavily to her feet. ‘But I do say, I am sorry for poor George,’ letting fly a Parthian shot as she quitted the room.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LONDON LIFE VIEWED FROM LONDON LODGINGS.

Poverty makes people satirical—soberly, sadly, bitterly satirical.—FRISWELL.

It was nearly twelve o’clock when our travellers arrived at their London lodgings, and too tired and dispirited to be observant, they found the general appearance of everything satisfactory, and the meal which had been prepared, appetising.

But the morning showed all in a different light.

To be sure the place was not more dirty and disorderly than such abodes usually are, but it looked insufferably small, dull, and ill-furnished to eyes lately accustomed to surroundings which, if not invariably in the best of taste, were at all events as handsome and substantial as an elongated upholsterer’s bill could make them. The apartments at Flodden Hall had moreover been arranged so as to admit abundance of light; Mr. Schofield liked to see into every nook and corner of his carvings and gildings; and while this had at first been a drawback in the eyes of his nieces, eventually they had come to find other rooms with less noble windows heavy and uninteresting.

Cullingdon had of course been excepted; but then Cullingdon, with its long, narrow, mullioned casements, had been a spot by itself; its ivied turrets and terraces had competed with no other

domain in the neighbourhood, and its lofty arched roofs had entered into no comparison with their modern ceilings.

Of course, Flodden Hall, and Bingley Hall, and all the other halls about, had been vulgar as compared with Cullingdon,—but they had also been marvellously comfortable. Even of Bingley Hall Monica now thought with tenderness, when its spacious suites rose in the retrospect. It was always now present to her remembrance as beheld upon that memorable evening when she had seen the sportsmen advancing in the distance through a vista of open doorways, and when, their goal reached, the one who had at first threatened to be a recusant had paid her his open, bold, defiant court, in a way that had made all others stand aloof.

Repent as she might, there would always be a secret tenderness in her heart for the Carnforths' ample saloons, which had afforded space for such isolation and devotion.

And Monica and Bell had learned to alter their opinion even of their own more modest mansion in the mercantile neighbourhood. People must indeed be hard to please if they cannot live contentedly in a house which has absolutely no blemishes in point of convenience or comfort; which is warm or cool, according to requirement; which is perfectly ventilated, without the suspicion of a draught; and whose dining-room faces the setting sun.

Not an apartment in Mr. Schofield's villa but was arranged so as to suit some hour of the day. Even the turns of the staircase and the windows on the landings had been thought out with care, and turned to account. Broad, shallow steps, velvet pile, and gigantic brass rods had but ill prepared our sisters for the rickety, odorous little flight of stairs by which they had to ascend and descend in Albion Street.

The wall-papers looked unutterable things at them. There were grimy patches near the doors, as though that locality had been used as a resting-place for an endless succession of weary chambermaids.

There were holes and darns in the carpets; castors were off table-legs, which were propped up by adroit contrivances; and springs were broken in the most specious and inviting-looking of the easy chairs. The little sofa was as hard as if it had been a bare board.

All of this was not, of course, discoverable at the first glance. A new-comer would say, as the few who came to see the Miss Lavenhams did say, 'What nice lodgings! What a cosy little

sitting-room!' But the poor girls soon found out that one can look tolerably cosy without by any means feeling so.

'A good fire goes a great way,' Monica would aver, and in consequence she always kept up a good fire, piling on the coal, which was excellent coal, and gave forth long bright jets of flame when stirred. Furthermore, she and Bell soon effected a revolution in regard to crochet-antimacassars, and the like; they had plenty of pretty things and made use of them,—but they could not make the furniture what it was not. No amount of elegant drapery could stuff cushions, or repair springs.

'And our bedroom is so very dark and dingy,' Bell would murmur disconsolately. 'It is dreadfully bare, too; we have literally nowhere to hang our dresses. There is neither hanging-cupboard nor wardrobe; and as for the chests of drawers, we have each one chest of drawers, and three of my frocks nearly fill mine! The washing-stands are still worse. I really dislike getting up in the mornings.'

'Now what is Bell grumbling about over there?' Monica interposed one day when Bell had reached this point, her auditor being an old friend who had come to Albion Street for lack of something better to do, when passing through London on her way to the Riviera. 'If you listen to her, my dear Mary, she will grumble solemnly on all day long. Bell likes to drone. It is her music. She droned when we went to Flodden Hall; she drones now.'

'I never droned in Lowndes Square.'

'Oh, but I think you did, my dear!'

Miss Mary Howard, the visitor, laughed a little at the remembrance. 'Bell generally had some little grievance or other when I used to come to Lowndes Square, as far as I remember, had she not, Monica? By the way, how are your uncle and aunt? Still abroad?'

'Oh, yes, for the winter.'

'That is why we are here,' cried Bell, rather eagerly. 'It is quite possible that aunt Fanny may be well enough to come home in the spring, and then, of course, we cannot tell what will be done. So Monica and I thought we had better just set up house for ourselves,' she added, hoping devoutly that Monica would say nothing to such a statement.

Nor did Monica. She was not a saint. She had only just begun to be honest; and so, though well aware that a colouring was being thrown upon their present mode of life which the facts of the case would scarcely bear out, she told herself she was not obliged to be disagreeable and contradictory.

In her heart she was perfectly sure that to receive her sister and herself once again as members of their family circle was the last idea likely to occur to Colonel and Mrs. Lavenham. People who are selfish at the beginning of a separation, are seldom less so when separation has done its work. Their aunt had written a languid, conventional epistle, in which her own and her husband's continued invalidism was dwelt upon at full length, and which contained a somewhat pointed reference to the expense of hotel life, the ruinous charges of Continental doctors, &c., &c.

Very few sentences had disposed of her nieces' bereavement; it had been 'a sad event'; Mrs. Lavenham sincerely trusted they had not 'suffered from the shock': she supposed they would 'remain among their relations in the North, where they had met with so much kindness': and she begged they would let her and their uncle know 'when their plans were settled.'

'It was a pity we told her of the kindness,' Bell reflected, when the last words were reached.

She and Monica, stung by the contrast between the cool abandonment of their first guardian and the wholehearted devotion of their second, had sounded Mr. Schofield's praises in every letter from Flodden Hall, with a double sense of pleasure in doing so. They had—or, at least, Monica had—liked to give vent to her gratitude, as well as hoped that the ardour of her expressions would nettle the recipients, who might read between the lines, and perceive that the young relations whom they could thus cast off at a moment's notice were not so blind but that they could mark a difference, and note a distinction.

They had not been allowed to perceive whether or not the arrow thus sped had found a mark. Colonel and Mrs. Lavenham had merely expressed gratification at all they heard; and, indeed, they had probably only experienced the same, for there are people who are entirely indifferent to all such considerations as being beloved and respected, especially by those whom they have done with, and from whom they expect no more; and, accordingly, when a reply arrived from Monte Carlo, where the elderly pair were already settled for the winter at the time of Mr. Schofield's death—or, at least, at the time they heard of it, ten days later, since no one had cared to write before)—there had been an obvious underlying strain of congratulation on the fatal event's having happened, since it had happened at all, after Monica and Isabel had become known to the Schofield connection.

'They are all as rich as Jews up there,' Colonel Lavenham

told his wife in private. 'No doubt the girls will get a good share of the money, somehow. We did the right thing when we shunted them off to Liverpool; we were in the nick of time: now they have taken hold there, and can look out for themselves. It was as good as binding them apprentices to a trade, sending them to uncle Joseph—ha! ha! ha! Certainly it was a pity Joseph hopped the twig,' more seriously. 'I had meant to run up there some day, and pay him a visit; and I feel sure we should have been the best of friends. My "brother-in-law," you know. Oh, it should have been "brother-in-law," or anything else, so long as he took the girls off our hands; and the old fellow was so decent about it, so uncommonly handsome, I may really say, that I could have put my feet under his mahogany, and drunk his '43 port with the very greatest satisfaction. Now, my dear Fanny,' the Colonel had proceeded, 'whatever you do, not a word to those two about returning to London. London must be a tabooed place to them henceforth. They must stay where they are; that must be the first thing to make plain. They have got into the Schofield swim, and in the Schofield swim they must remain. I hear there is a young Schofield—he is probably the head of the firm now—why should he not do for one of them? Anyhow, there are lots of other young merchant princes gaping for wives like Monica and Isabel. It would be the very ruin of those two to take them away from such advantages; and so I must beg you to be careful what you say. Liverpool must be everything to them—London, nothing. That's the point to make. Keep them out of London by hook or by crook—by fair means, or foul. We may—ahem!—we may return to London ourselves some day.'

His nieces were already there, when the letter, carrying out the above instructions, reached them.

Monica saw through it at a glance. A sarcastic smile played upon her lips as she read. 'Oh, you need not be afraid, good people!' she cried, apostrophising the document. 'We shan't trouble you. We know now what to expect from you. Our "Schofield relations" forsooth! Our "Schofield relations" were a thousand times better and kinder to us than ever our Lavenham relations have been. We are supposed to settle down among our "Schofield relations," are we? I—no, I won't say I wish we could have done so, but it is something to feel that *they* wished it. *They* did not send us away; *they* would not have written a cold, cruel letter such as this. Oh, poor uncle Schofield! what would he have felt

if he had read these set phrases about himself? He who was the dearest, the best, the only friend to us in our extremity, to be disposed of in a formal sentence or two! That terrible, terrible death which befell him, to be called a 'sad event!' Not a word of real sympathy, nor sorrow. Well, sorrow, of course, aunt Fanny could not be supposed to feel, but she might have known that *we* were sorrowing, and have felt a little for *us*. I do not believe she has had one single twinge. She would say "Dear me!" and sip her wine and water, and ring for something or other she had forgotten to bring downstairs, before finishing my letter! I know; I have seen her. When her own brother was lying dangerously ill, hanging on from day to day, she used to stop in the middle of reading the morning's accounts to pour herself out her second cup of tea! She would do the same if uncle Lavenham were dying; so would he if she were. They have no hearts; they do not know what hearts are. And if we, Bell and I, had gone on living with them, we should have grown like them. It is true that we despised what we saw, and it often made us indignant and contemptuous; but that was because we were young, and had still about us some remnants of human nature as it is planted in childhood. We should have outgrown that: we were on the high road to it.'

She paused, then spoke more firmly, and spoke aloud though no one was by. 'Thank God, we were stopped in time. We have had an awakening; and I am glad—yes, glad,' emphatically, 'that it came; and that it came in the shape it did. This letter confirms it. If uncle and aunt Lavenham had written warmly, lovingly—written begging us to join them—or even claiming us, on their return to London—we should have accepted such an invitation as a matter of course. Poor Bell, I am afraid, was counting upon it. She is in tears upstairs now. She begins to realise what we have to expect. But I?—I rejoice: I am free: I see myself—and her—beginning a new life, untrammelled by old ties and teachings. We shall learn together what the better way is like, and perhaps some day—some day'—her voice sank, 'we shall begin to tread it.'

'You know I could not have believed they would really write like that,' said Isabel, coming downstairs with swollen eyelids. 'I took it for granted they would say *something*. It seemed as if they could not *help* saying something. I had made up my mind that we should have to be here all the winter; and that we should have to be very poor, and have no carriage, and do without

Josephine; but I thought it would not really so very much matter as long as hardly anybody else was in Town. We could always have given the excuse that we were only here while uncle Lavenham and aunt Fanny were abroad; and made out that it was rather fun living alone, and all that; and it really might have been fun if it had been done for fun, don't you see, Monica? But if this is to be *our life*——,' and again her eyes swam, and she looked round with an expression that filled her sister's orbs also.

Monica felt this would not do.

'It is rather dark just ahead,' she began, but in spite of a desire to say more, could find no utterance for another word at the moment.

'To live in lodgings—*always!*' murmured Bell.

No rejoinder.

'Monica, how much have we exactly?'

'Three hundred a year, between us.'

'And had we nothing, absolutely nothing, from uncle Schofield?'

'Absolutely nothing. You know how it was. He had meant to leave us everything; he died before he had arranged anything.'

'Well, they might have given us some of it, Monica.'

Monica smiled a little. 'Whom do you mean by "they"? ' she said. 'We could not very well have gone to the beneficiaries—how I did hate that word, when it came over and over again in the will!—and said to them, "Give back your ill-gotten gold—it only came to you by a fluke,——"'

—'Oh, Monica, how can you talk like that!'

'I talk like that, my dear sister, by deep design. Believe me, I am at heart a gloomy, embittered, soul-maddened creature'—(she was now herself again), 'but if I give way to the stormy billows within, they would presently rise into a hurricane—a tempest—a tornado,' suitably declaiming and attitudinising, 'which would sweep all (*molto crescendo*) before it! Heigho! I wish it would sweep this chimney!'

Isabel could not choose but laugh, as a gust of soot descended at the moment, and the bathos was irresistible. 'That's right; laugh again, my dear,' said Monica, in a more natural tone. 'Now we shall get on. A fig for fashion and folly! We are going to be independent young ladies, living prudently within our means. We shall see London from a new point of view. There are great sights to be seen in all directions, which we should

never have beheld to the end of our days, but for this chance. We should never have penetrated where we can now penetrate. We will "do" our London, Bell. We have "done" Paris, and Rome, and Venice, and Florence; but we should never have "done" our own London from Lowndes Square. I want to see, oh, so many places, and find out about so many things! If we cannot have one side of the cake, we will eat away at the other. And I can tell you one thing, my dear Bell, the people who *are* in Town in the winter will be a great deal more glad to see us, and will have far more time for us, than they would have in the summer. I fancy we shall find ourselves in request at the present moment. We are not going to shut ourselves up; don't you be afraid. We will make a round of calls presently, and see who's where, and what they mean to be to us? There are *some* nice people everywhere—even aunt Fanny knew a few. I think the Belmonts were nice. Oh, the Oxendens were very nice! Lady Skipworth was not half bad. I will put down the names and addresses—now, dear me, what shall I do about the addresses? Surely I know them. I used to call them out, one after another; but it is tiresome,' musing. 'I am afraid, I am really afraid I shall be at sea now. What a pity we did not think of taking aunt Fanny's visiting book away with us! But, of course, we never dreamed of needing it so soon again.'

'No, we never dreamed of needing it so soon again,' echoed Bell, brightening under the idea. 'Monica, do you remember how you laughed at me for saying we might be in Town next season? You see I was right after all. We really shall be in Town next season.'

'Well, yes, in Town,' said Monica, glancing at her sister furtively. 'It was not precisely this I meant by being "in Town." But, however, as Mrs. Schofield would say—Bell, have you noticed how she clings to that "but, however," whenever she is on the full trot of conversation? It is her plank by which she steps from one subject to another. She whips it up under her arm, and carries it off to the next point, and down it goes, and she is away over it, and in the middle of her next sentence before you know what she is up to. "But, however," Bell, my dear, here we are, and here we have got to stay. I think I made that remark once before, when we arrived at Flodden Hall. Ah! poor Flodden Hall! we little thought—"but, however," I am going to run away and dress to go out now, Bell, and you had better come with me.'

If we do not catch the little sunshine there is on a November day, we shall repent when night comes.'

'It is always night here,' murmured her sister, under her breath.

She thought Monica did not catch the words, but Monica did.

CHAPTER XXX.

FINDING FRIENDS.

Friends are much better tried in bad fortune than in good.—ARISTOTLE.

ALAS! Scarcely a single personage of Mrs. Lavenham's acquaintance was in London in mid-November, and very few were expected much before the following Easter. The Lavenhams had only cultivated intercourse with people of fashion, people of their own sort; idlers who were of no use to the world, and who had therefore no reason for dwelling where the world's chief business is carried on.

Accordingly the houses which Monica and Isabel had been wont to frequent were now fast closed, and the poor girls turned from one and another with ever decreasing expectations and anticipations. They had put on their new mourning, and it suited them. Walking suited them also. Going by the Underground Railway to Sloane Square, they had emerged among familiar scenes on a clear, frosty afternoon, and their spirits had risen under the prospect of tripping briskly from house to house, and being welcomed, at any rate, at some.

At not a single door did they gain admittance. The one or two acquaintances who were in residence, were out; but by far the greater number of dwellings were deserted.

'Oh, this is dreadful!' said poor Bell, at last. She was tired out as well as bitterly disappointed. 'It seems so strange, so odd to be going about like this. Exactly as if we were being turned away from every place.'

'Nonsense!'

'Nonsense, if you like, but you need not be so sharp. I only said it seemed as if we were. We have gone all round this square, and round Belgrave Square, and Eaton Square. We have been up and down Eaton Place——'

—'Never mind where we have been.'

'But I am tired, Monica. I cannot walk much more. Oh, if we only knew one good house to go to, where we could be *sure* of being let in, and finding people at tea!'

'I know one,' Monica began; then hesitated and considered. 'I did not mean to go to them, I am afraid,' she said; 'but, Bell, there are the Rowlands.'

'The Rowlands?'

'Yes. Do you not remember that they said we should always be welcome in Queen's Gate?'

'Queen's Gate? Where is Queen's Gate?'

'No great distance. A shilling hansom. Shall we go? You know we always liked the Rowlands.'

'But what are they doing here?' said Bell. 'I liked them, of course. I liked them down at uncle Schofield's,—but I never thought of their being in London. How did you remember they came to London? I am sure I had forgotten: indeed, I do not think I ever knew they did.'

'I remember, because I was surprised when they first told me. The house is their own, and they come to it regularly—at least, some of them do. It struck me as being rather a bright idea. You know what a large family there is. Well, some of them can always manage to be here, to make a home for the one—the father, or the eldest son—who has to be in London. One or other has always to be here, Mrs. Rowland told me. Merchants and those sort of people often have two places to work at once,' proceeded she, feeling very wise. 'Uncle Schofield said so. Now, Bell, what shall we do? If we call on these Rowlands it means that we are willing to take up again the threads we dropped when we left Lancashire. We have no need to call. I daresay they would never expect it. And, of course, they are not to know we are here. But somehow—I—what do you think?'

'Oh, I think we had better go, Monica.'

'You will be nice and pleasant, if we do? No airs, Bell?'

'What would be the use of "airs" with the Rowlands?' muttered Bell.

'Of what use are they with anybody?' added Monica, to herself. One of her new experiences was that some folks are not as simple as one would think.

A hansom was hailed, and the sisters drove to Queen's Gate. It was all right this time; the door was thrown back with a swing, and a warmly lit-up hall within looked tempting to the

two wistful pairs of eyes which had, in hunting phrase, drawn so many covers blank that afternoon.

'Oh, they are in; I am so glad!' whispered Isabel, with a sigh of satisfaction. 'We had better keep this hansom, had we not? We might not find another just when we want to come away.'

Her sister thought so too. The poor things had never been used to economise, and the man was kept waiting an hour. This taught them an experience. I doubt if they ever kept a hansom at anyone's door again.

Certainly they did not at the Rowlands'. But we will return to this first call.

Preceded into a lofty saloon, nobly appointed and arranged, the first sight which met the Miss Lavenhams' eyes was a little picture of fireside comfort, which had the effect of an oasis in what it would have been hard to term a desert, but which might have passed for one for lack of a better simile. Screened in on either side was an enormous fire, whose glowing mass shone reflected in all the steel and brass around; in front, and almost upon the broad hearthrug, were several small tables, well laden with silver and china, containing materials for tea temptingly set out; and beside these tables there stood up on their entrance two people who had evidently been disturbed, but not unwillingly disturbed, by their entrance.

They recognised Ernest and Gertrude Rowland, the eldest son and daughter of the house, who, it presently appeared, were the only occupants of the town mansion at the present date.

'How very kind of you to come!' said Miss Rowland, while her brother set chairs, and all drew round the tea-tables. 'I am so glad we were at home. Ernest and I nearly always are at home at this hour, as we have our tea and talk together now, and sometimes we go out afterwards; but we went out earlier to-day, it was so fine, and Ernest was able to get away. I am so glad we went,' she added.

'We are very glad too,' murmured Monica, and 'Very glad,' softly echoed her sister. Each had a curious sensation at the moment. Bell, I think, was saying to herself, 'If you only knew *how* glad!' while her sister was experiencing a more complicated feeling. She had, as she had said, liked the Rowlands when at Flodden Hall; she had exempted them from her wholesale contempt of the surrounding neighbourhood; and Dorrien's acquiescence had confirmed her penetration. But it must be confessed that she had only beheld them superior by comparison; and that,

had fortune smiled upon herself, she would in all probability have neither advanced in friendship nor in intimacy. Therefore she had almost a sense of guilt in being thus welcomed, and in having it supposed that she and her sister had gone out of their way to seek a welcome. If the finer people had been at home and friendly, would they ever have remembered Queen's Gate? It was only in consequence of having been turned away from the last doorstep, and of its being a toss-up whether they should go home to their scanty lodgings, weary and tea-less, or should make one more trial in a less genteel quarter, that the latter quest had been undertaken.

The cordial tone and beaming eye of her youthful hostess smote Monica now with a sense of compunction.

It was compunction, however, which swiftly gave way to more pleasurable emotions. She heard with real satisfaction that the brother and sister were settled down for the winter; that they were not going off to this place or that, as was nearly everyone else whom she and Bell had met;—and she found the two in themselves all that was agreeable, and more than agreeable. There was a positive eagerness in their reception of the sisters' communications regarding themselves, an alacrity in their responses, and a quiet, yet marked goodwill in their whole demeanour, which could not have been got up at a moment's notice. Evidently she and Isabel must have been liked before, and liked for their own sakes. This touched her; what had she done, or what had Isabel done to make these people like them? In looking back upon the past, Monica could not but reflect that they had done little enough in life to make anybody like them. The most that could be said of them was that they had done no harm, and even that, she cried to herself with a start, could not be said of *her*.

But here were these two, this son and daughter of their uncle's old neighbours, who had only met his nieces a few times, on which occasions Monica could not recollect being or doing anything particular—(and when she had certainly received no remarkable impressions of any sort herself)—here they were with their outstretched hands, their unaffected smiles, their interested and sympathetic inquiries—it was too much. She found herself telling Gertrude of this thing and that, consulting her about divers little troubles, and frankly admitting the very facts of her new life which she would most carefully have guarded from another listener. There was something she could not resist in the kind face before her.

'I am sure you will be very happy and comfortable, if you are like Ernest and me,' said Gertrude, presently. 'We are so happy together that, if I must confess it, we are always a little bit sorry when all the rest come up and flood the house. It is very naughty of us, is it not? But London is so quiet and peaceful just now; one can do what one likes; go where one likes; and see the things and the people one really wishes to see. Do you not find it so?'

'I don't know,' said Monica, simply. 'I never was in London in November before.'

'You are sure to like it. In the season it is always such a rush. One never gets anything done. Now, one has time for everything.'

'Oh, time—yes,' said poor Monica, with rather a quavering smile. 'I don't suppose Bell and I will feel the want of time,' and she caught her breath just as she was about to add avowals that in a cooler moment she might have wished unsaid.

Miss Rowland, however, had heard enough. 'Delightful!' she exclaimed. 'Then I may venture to make a proposal I should not have dared to do otherwise. Will you sometimes join me when I drive about? I cannot tell you how glad I should be of a companion. I am all alone in the daytime, you know. Ernest only comes home at half-past five, and I have a great, big carriage here, in which I sit up all alone day after day. Do let me call for you to go with me sometimes. I will take you anywhere you like. I never have much to do, and it would be so much pleasanter going together, if you would.'

An assent being readily given, 'I usually end with Mudie's,' proceeded the speaker; 'we change our books every other day, sometimes oftener, and I like to change them myself. And I like looking in there and seeing what is going on; do you belong to Mudie's?'

Now Monica knew that Mudie's subscription, in common with many other good things, was beyond her present reach, and a few months ago she would have rejoined with some easy excuse, the thought of the moment, to conceal this and evade curiosity; it was a sign of the struggle towards a purer ideal which had been born within her soul that she now in reply gave utterance to a simple negative. Of course Miss Rowland divined what lay behind this negative. That she did not at once offer to lend books, that she did not proffer all kinds of services and attentions was due to delicacy of feeling alone. Wealthy and generous, her

impulse would have been to lavish at once upon the two whom she had known in such different circumstances every kind of thoughtful benefaction—but she knew better. All that she could do must be done later; done when continued intercourse and intimacy, and perhaps affection, warranted as much; and accordingly her quiet dismissal of the subject and gradual transition to another was all that could be desired.

‘We are really staying an unmerciful time,’ exclaimed Monica suddenly, and she looked round for her sister. Bell, with a bright tint on either cheek, was leaning over her muff, merry as Monica had of late but seldom seen her. On the edge of a lounge near, bending forward as occasion required, and equally merry and well occupied, was Mr. Ernest Rowland. The book of coloured caricatures wherewith he was regaling his visitor apparently entertained them both.

‘One minute, Monica, just one minute,’ cried the latter, in obedience to the sisterly summons. ‘Mr. Rowland is showing me such a funny book. It is really too funny; it is quite delicious; you ought to see it; do show it to her,’ to the showman. ‘Oh, did you say we really must go? Well, I must leave the rest,’ regretfully closing the tempting volume.

‘—To another time. I shall put a marker in, and call it Miss Lavenham’s marker,’ and the book was lifted from her lap.

As the speaker lifted it another pair of eyes were directed towards him. It flashed through Monica’s mind on the instant that she had been told young Mr. Rowland was considered the handsomest man in Liverpool. He was tall, broad-shouldered, and athletically formed. Every feature was correct, and the head was well carried on the shoulders. She could find no fault with him. Had she lived till Doomsday she would never have admired him. Why was this? She could not tell. But though her own opinion on the point might be immaterial, there was someone else whose verdict was of more consequence. What, for instance, did Bell think? It would never do for Bell to be taking fancies into her head. That Mr. Rowland was making himself agreeable was all very well, as it should be, and in all respects desirable *pour passer le temps*. ‘But we have had enough of love-making and mischief-making for the present, at least,’ sighed poor Monica, with a little treacherous ache beneath her own bosom. ‘I must take care of my Bell. She must neither suffer, nor make others suffer as I have done.’

‘Isabel,’ she cried gaily, aloud, ‘I am afraid to think of the

names that poor man outside must be calling us by this time! We must not stay a minute longer. Do you know how long we have stayed already? I don't. I could not see the clock from where I sat, and I shall not look at it now.' Protestations and laughter, and a hubbub of hearty 'good-byes,' and the two were off.

'She is to call for us at three o'clock to-morrow,' said Monica, with animation. 'We are to drive about, and do our shopping—not that we have much to do, but still there are some places I really want to go to,—and, besides, I thought it better to accept the first invitation, in case we might not get another. It will really make a difference to our whole life, Bell, if we have a nice girl like that to go about with, and a nice carriage to go about in.'

'It will really,' said Bell, in the same tone. 'I was so glad you agreed to it. For a few moments I was afraid you were going to refuse.'

'I never thought of refusing.'

'I suppose you only demurred at the first so as not to seem too eager. Of course it would not do to seem too eager; but, still, Monica, with *them* I somehow should not mind. They were so very kind—both of them. I think the brother wanted to ask us to something; did you see how he slipped behind and whispered in her ear—but she just pressed her lips together and gave him a look. Then she caught my eye. But she did not do it in the least disagreeably, only as if—I fancy she thought it was in better taste not. Do you not think it was that?'

'I am sure of it; and she was quite right. But we will go if they ask us. I like that girl. She has sense—which we have not.'

'Oh, Monica, *you* have!'

'I might have had, if it had been called into play—but sense had no chance in Lowndes Square. We all said the same things, and did the same things; and whether we either felt what we said, or liked what we did, it was all one. It was *chic* to do this and that—and to be *chic* was enough. Bell, my dear, we are not *chic* now; I begin to have some hope for us.'

'Do you—do you think Ernest Rowland handsome, Monica?'

'Very handsome, Bell.'

'Uncle Schofield said he was considered the best-looking man in Liverpool.'

'He would be a good-looking man anywhere.'

'He has not the air of Harry Dorrien,' said Bell, as though to herself. 'Harry had an air—a way of holding his head up and dropping his eyelids down—even I used to feel sometimes that I

liked to look at him, and he never took the slightest notice of me. I know you must have loved him, when for you he——'

—'Hush!' said Monica, softly. A cold moon was shining into her eyes, and she kept them turned full towards it; Bell's babble was sweeter to her ear than she would have cared for Bell to know, and there was no refuge but in silence when this was the case.

It had been agreed between the sisters that Dorrien was to be spoken of freely between them. 'I will not have him turned into a sealed subject,' Monica had said. 'I did Mr. Dorrien a great wrong, and he owes me, or ought to owe me, a bitter grudge. But he does not see it so, and we parted friends. I should like to hear you talk of him now and then, dear Bell. Your talking would be better than my thinking,' and she smiled a little, and tried thus to pass off the subject.

But, all the same, Bell was not to encroach. She might say that Dorrien had an air, and own to having liked to look at him,—but she was not to insist on prying into whether this feeling had been shared by anyone else. She was to be content with her own admiration.

'But you think Mr. Ernest Rowland is handsome, notwithstanding, my dear Miss Penetration?' continued Monica, presently.

'Oh, yes, I do. Do you not? And he has very good manners, and a pleasant voice. I liked him very much to-day. And, Monica, what a delightful house it was—so comfortable; and that cosy nook by the fire, all sheltered in from the rest of the room, and those great, easy chairs, and that good tea. I don't think I ever enjoyed afternoon tea so much in my life,' with renewed zest of appetite at the recollection.

'You certainly looked as if you never had.'

'What do you mean, Monica?'

'Oh, nothing, Bell.'

'But you do mean something. I hear it in your laughing voice; your voice always laughs when you are mischievous, and so do your eyes. Let me see your eyes. Yes, they are just as full of laughter as they can be. Monica, what is it? Oh, Monica, you don't mean—you can't mean——'

—'If I mean anything, it will come out soon enough,' said Monica, springing lightly down as the hansom stopped. 'I am not sure that I do mean anything; but if I did, I expect I should mean—Mr. Ernest Rowland.'

Bell walked into the house deeply affronted.

(To be continued.)

*Archbishop Tait of Canterbury.*¹

‘I NEVER liked Tait. I never could like him. And of course I differed from him on many subjects. But I will acknowledge, that during the years of his Primacy, there was no man in the Church of England, known to me, so fit to be Archbishop.’

I was not likely to forget the words; nor any words seriously said by one so revered. It was a great event in the writer's little history, to have a quiet talk with such a man. But I wrote down the words that evening; and many more which will never be printed. For indeed they were of special interest. We were sitting in a quaint old room, in a quiet recess just out of the busiest roar of great London. I watched intently the worn fine features, with their expression of singular benignity and sweetness, as the words were said: said by one who might have been Archbishop of Canterbury himself had he chosen.

Then, in less grave mood: ‘Curious, his being so quiet and self-restrained in the latter days. I was there when *Tait of Balliol*, with a tremendous flourish of his cap, defied the President of the Oxford Union and was fined a pound.’ The speaker arose from his chair, and going through the action of violently bringing the cap from far behind him, shook it as in the President's face in truculent fashion. And sitting down, he added, with a smile, ‘He was very hot-tempered then.’ It could only have been occasionally, one would say.

I do not think any testimony ever borne to Tait's fitness for his great place would have been more valued by himself than this of the saintly Dean Church of St. Paul's: of whom it was truly said by one of the foremost Prelates of the Anglican Church, belonging to quite another party from the Dean's, ‘There is nothing in the Church that he is not worthy of.’ And now that both Dean and

¹ Life of Archibald Campbell Tait, Archbishop of Canterbury. By Randall Thomas Davidson, D.D., Dean of Windsor; and William Benham, B.D., Hon. Canon of Canterbury. In Two Volumes. London: Macmillan & Co., 1891.

Archbishop are gone, there can be no harm in repeating what was equally honourable to both.

We do not mind much about Tait's frequent statements, beginning early, that he was to be Archbishop of Canterbury. Probably fifty other men were saying the like of themselves about the same time. And one great scholar and divine, still abiding, was far more solemnly designated to the primatial throne, by one possessed of the second sight. It was never to be. But when the writer was a boy, and Tait was no farther on his way than Rugby (where nobody pretends he was a very great Head-Master), the writer was often told by one who had heard the words, how Sir Daniel Sandford had said, 'That boy will wear the mitre.' It was well remembered, too, how James Halley, whom Sir Daniel pointed out as 'the man that beat Tait,' had said, near the end, 'I'd have liked to live to see Archy Tait a Bishop.' Other estimates were current too. For Tait, though a great scholar at Glasgow College, when he went to England was never in the same flight with either of the Wordsworths, Lincoln or St. Andrews. It was after a great debate at the Union, at the time of the Reform Bill of Lord Grey, that a brilliant Oxford Tutor wrote to his brother, Senior Classic at Cambridge, of the magnificent eloquence of certain young orators who had taken part in it. Several were named: but, outstanding among them, was one 'Gladstone, a sure Double-First,' who spoke 'better than Demosthenes': of course on the side of the most obstructive Toryism. The entire aristocracy of the University, intellectual and social, was ranged on one side. 'And who is there on the other?' the enthusiastic chronicler went on. (Names shall be withheld, save one.) 'A, Nobody: B, Nobody: C, Nobody: Tait, Nobody!' The irony of the event is sometimes terrible. And as the revered scholar who wrote the letter read it aloud to a little company after fifty-five years, he added, 'You see young men should not prophesy.'

But Tait had reached his highest place, and none could call him *Nobody* (you might like him or not), when one of the greatest men in the great Church of England said to the writer, 'I don't regard the Archbishop as a clergyman at all. He is a hard-headed Scotch lawyer.' And then, in the most pathetic tones of the voice which thousands held their breath to hear, 'If I were dying, the very last man I should wish to see is the Archbishop of Canterbury!' No one who reads the *Life* would say the like now; and the great and good man gone, least of all.

But see how the foremost fail to understand one another. Not many quotations can be suffered in my little space. But one shall come here. It tells of the end of his dear old Nurse, 'almost my oldest and dearest friend.' Tait had taken his First-Class, and came to Edinburgh for Christmas.

'One day, towards the end of December, she was taken ill. The ailment seemed slight at first, but by the time her beloved Archie arrived she was in high fever, and occasionally distressed in mind. He never left her side except once, when he went to obtain the aid of Mr. Craig, a clergyman of the Scottish Episcopal Church, in order that the old nurse and her grown-up charge might together receive the Holy Communion, which at that time was rarely, if ever, administered privately in the Presbyterian Church, of which Betty was so staunch an adherent.¹ When the Holy Communion had been celebrated, Mr. Craig left the two alone together. All night the young man sat by the old nurse's bed, and spoke to her words of peace and comfort as she was able to bear it. She died with her hand clasped in his as the morning broke on the first day of 1834.'

Yes, and it would have been exactly the same had dear old Betty lived to see him Primate. Some words come back to one's memory. He was an illustrious man who said lightly, 'So old Tait's away.' The answer was, 'Yes, gone to Paradise.' The rejoinder came. 'Very good, but he won't be Archbishop of Canterbury there.' And indeed he would not. But though he could not take any earthly elevation where he went, he would take with him, wheresoever, the unspoiled heart of that long-departed New-year's-eve. Which is far better.

Too much is made of the Archbishop's Presbyterian extraction and education, as though these did in some degree disqualify him for his place. No doubt, his father was an Elder of the Kirk. So were his two brothers: and they sat regularly in the General Assembly, where Sheriff Tait of Perthshire was an outstanding man. Many times, in May days just departed, the writer beheld the two Maclagans, brothers of the new Archbishop of York, sitting in that Venerable House. And in his youth he preached, each Sunday afternoon, in a Scotch parish church, to the Archbishop's father and mother. Dean Lake of Durham, in a strain which falls familiar on the ear,² expresses his opinion that Archbishop Tait, in his Episcopal life, 'made serious mistakes, both in word

¹ God be thanked, all that is changed.

² Vol. ii. p. 607.

and action.' Then comes the apology for the uncultured Scot : which will provoke a smile in some readers :

'But when we think of the manner in which, born and bred in a different Communion, he gradually learned, in a time of great difficulty, to understand and even to sympathise with all the varieties of the English Church, and of his constantly increasing determination to do justice to them all—a determination which, I believe, would have gone much further, had his life been preserved'—

And so on. Here is a bit of that high-bred provincialism, too common in the Anglican Church, which is based on absolute ignorance of things Scottish. There is no gulf at all between the best in the Church of Scotland and the best in the Church of England. Presbytery is accepted, as suiting the genius of the Scottish race : but it counts for nothing, when compared with such vital questions as those of a National profession of Christianity and a National Church. Not an anti-state-church Presbyterian, but a good Anglican churchman, is brother to most men worth counting in the Scottish Kirk. And should the day come which will put Scottish churchmen to right and left, that will appear. It is twenty-seven years since Mr. Froude, after his very first evening in Scotland, spent in the company of some who are mostly gone, said to the writer, 'I see your best men are exactly like our best men.' And it is many a day since Dr. Liddon, on his first day in St. Andrews, said how astonished he was at the sympathy he had met in the Kirk : said that though a system he liked not had gradually 'crystallised, through the fault of nobody living,' he found himself drawn, in true affection, to the men. Yet everybody knows that Liddon was uncompromising in his ecclesiastical views : even to a degree which certain of his Scottish friends found hard to bear : indeed did not bear but with frank expression of astonishment. When Bishop Wilberforce came to Scotland, and went about with his eyes blind-folded, he did indeed accept as true, and record in that very regrettable diary, various stories about the Church which were rather more outrageous than if he had stated that black was white. And on August 11, 1861, he wrote therein of 'the bitter, levelling spirit of Presbyterianism' : a spirit which may possibly once have been, but which is utterly extinct among educated men. Quite as much narrowness, bitterness, and wrong-headedness, may be found in certain strata of the Church of England, as anywhere North of the Tweed. Read many of the letters which Tait

received, not all anonymous: and this will be apparent. The future Archbishop had not far to go; and had nothing at all to get over. Of course, to the end, it remained impossible for him to believe that all vital Christianity was confined to the members of Churches with Three Orders. It was with him as when Principal Shairp went to Oxford in the beginning of the 'Movement,' and could but feel *If those men and women I have known in the Kirk were not Christians, I cannot expect to see any*. But gradually, Tait, in lesser things, not only understood the Anglican Church quite as thoroughly as Dean Lake, but even caught the atmosphere he lived in to a degree which amused a countryman. Meeting for the first time a Scottish parson who had studied Gothic churches for many years (it was under the shade of Canterbury), he said, 'Did you ever see a Cathedral before? I mean an English Cathedral.' Here appeared the natural belief of the travelled Scot that his brother Scot knows nothing. Ere the Scottish parson could reply, another dignitary, quite as famous as Tait, said, in a loud voice, 'He has seen them all. He knows a great deal more about them than you do.' Whereupon the ready Primate, with his sweetest smile, went on, 'Ah, but you must come and see Lambeth. That is quite as interesting as any Cathedral.' Scotsmen for the most part understand one another perfectly. It was an Englishman, not a Scot, who once said to the writer, speaking of a saintly woman of high worldly place (indeed very high), 'Between ourselves, I fear she is very little better than a Presbyterian.' The words were rendered in a whisper, as stating something too dreadful to be put in audible words.

We did not need this biography to assure us that only by some incredible mistake could the statement have crept into Bishop Wilberforce's *Life*,¹ that Tait said 'You will be the real Archbishop; I shall only be so in name.' And again, 'I do not care how soon the world knows what I know, that during your dear father's lifetime he was in reality Archbishop of Canterbury, and I was only his lieutenant.' Anything farther from the actual fact could not be imagined: fifty instances occur which so testify. Tait could not have acted under the orders of any mortal: least of all under the orders of Bishop Wilberforce. And Tait was not a gusher: though he was sometimes very outspoken. Such as knew him would testify that the sentences ascribed to him are singularly unlike his ordinary talk. As for his estimate of his

¹ P. 337. Edition in one vol.

brilliant contemporary, we find it expressed with perfect frankness. 'The Bishop of Oxford was as eloquent and indiscreet as usual.'¹

The writers of this Life have done their work very fairly, and very thoroughly. The defects of the book come of its not being merely a biography, but a minute history of the main events and controversies in the Church of England during Tait's Episcopate. We are told nothing but what we knew before: and many things are suppressed which many knew: knew not through irresponsible gossip, but surely. The frank revelations (in some details) of Bishop Wilberforce's Life, make a striking contrast with the reticence here. In the main, the Lives are like the men: though Tait could be very frank sometimes. And surely this Life would not make any modest and reasonable man ask to be Archbishop of Canterbury. Lambeth is all very well, though 'the most depressing of homes' in the judgment of one once the head of the family there: Addington in May, with those acres of rhododendrons, with the grand woods, the Scotch firs of Perthshire and the heather, can redeem the big, ugly, featureless house: and the little church is charming, with its quiet churchyard where Tait, Longley, and Sumner sleep, with only the green grass above them. Possibly it may be pleasant to take precedence of a Duke; and the income is handsome when a fleeced Primate has actually got hold of it. One such, a humorist, is said to have preached his first sermon from the text, 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves': and another, doing homage to the Queen, said she was the first official he had met who had not asked him for fifty guineas. But the responsibility is awful to a conscientious man: and unless to a man of very exceptional tastes, the work is incredibly wearisome. Every wrongheaded crank, every insolent idiot, every conscientious bearer of a testimony, from Lord Shaftesbury on one wing to Dr. Pusey on the other, with Dean Stanley away out in the open far from both, has his representation to make to the Archbishop as to what is ruining the Church of England: and his representation, often extremely lengthy, must be considered, and wisely and courteously answered. Not every answer can be as brief as that which in a line told a correspondent that the Archbishop did not see any necessity for the correspondent supplying an alleged deficiency in the Lord's Prayer. Then the dreariness, the utter lack of interest, of the fierce contentions on details of ritual and the like: all related in the Life with

¹ Vol. ii. . 5.

conscientious fairness and intolerable prolixity. The biographers were bound to do it, one feels: the fault is not theirs. Here is Scotland again, for quarrelsomeness and wrongheadedness and making vital of the pettiest matters. Well might Newman, still Anglican, write, 'O rail not at our brethren of the North:' our brethren of the South, though on different details, are exactly the same. And all these dreary squabbles must be patiently gone into by the Archbishop. Nothing must be contemptuously daffed aside: as Tait once said in Perthshire, *It wouldn't do*. Patience must be illimitable. And then the letters: the baskets-full to read; the baskets-full to write. Every Bishop of a large diocese has this cross to bear: but the Archbishop is a quasi-Patriarch; and from every corner of the earth where the Anglican Episcopate, or anything like it, has spread, the entreaty for counsel in all perplexity, for sympathy in all trouble, comes to Lambeth or Addington. One knows the meaning of the deteriorated handwriting: of the signature abridged to the utmost: of the gradual cessation of all punctuation. It tells a pathetic story of overwork: and that in the way which takes most out of a man, next to vehement oratory; perpetual letter-writing. A Bishop's letter is a touching thing to see: less so indeed when a Chaplain who has learnt to write exactly like him pens the letter, and the blameless Prelate does but add his name. Not many human beings realise what it is to write seventy letters in a day. The writer remembers how Dean Wellesley of Windsor once said to him, with asperity, 'You could not make Stanley a Bishop: he writes such an abominable hand.' But what would that hand have grown to, after twenty years on the Bench? It is not so many years since the writer walked, side by side with the Archbishop, up and down by the side of a little Scottish river. 'What insanity it was in A.,' he said, 'to work himself to death as he did!' Then, in a worn voice, with a sorrowful face, he expatiated on the foolishness of overworking. Ah, like other good men, wise for everybody except himself. Only anonymous letter-writers, as a rule, take upon themselves to admonish the Primate of All England. But the writer thought, within himself, 'There is not a man in Britain, to-day, overworking more than you.' Never hurried nor flurried: nothing morbid or fanciful about him: good, honest, brave, strong, cautious, far-seeing: astute without shadow of craftiness: placed very high, yet with head absolutely unturned: had but the burden been brought within man's bear-

ing, he need not have had that solemn warning before sixty, he ought to have lived to fourscore.

Then the sitting next the ministerial bench in the Lords, at any moment liable to be called on to speak in the name of the greatest National Church in Christendom. No wonder that somebody, the first time he had so to speak, was in a state of trepidation which a lay peer irreverently called 'a blue funk.' 'Why is not somebody else there?' was the question put to one who was criticising a Primate's action, having himself declined the Primacy. 'Ah,' was the quiet answer, 'that man would have disappeared. He would have been in his grave. It is too much for anyone.'

Tait was helped by his vein of Scottish humour. He listened to an amusing story with real enjoyment: and he told one admirably well. The sorrowful face, with the sad smile, added to the effect. Some remember one which Dean Stanley repeated at a Bishop's dinner at Lambeth on the authority of a Scottish friend. It elicited from the Archbishop no more than 'A very good story:' but it is literally true. On one of his latest visits to a certain country house in a Scottish county, he went alone to the post-office to send a telegram to his brother. He wrote it out. 'The Archbishop of Canterbury to Sheriff Tait,' and handed it in. The sceptical old postmaster read it aloud in contemptuous tones: '*The Archbishop of Canterbury:*' and added, 'Wha may ye be that taks this cognomen?' The Archbishop, taken aback, remained silent for a moment. The morning was cold, and he had a woollen comforter wrapped round his neck: but on second view, the postmaster thought he looked more respectable than on a first, and added, 'Maybe ye're the gentleman himsel.' Tait replied, modestly, 'For want of a better, I am.' On which the good old Scot hastened to apologise for his first suspicion of imposture: adding, 'I might have seen you were rather consequential about the legs.' Then he added words of cheer, which Tait said truly were vitally Scotch: 'I have a son in London, a lad in a shop; and he gaed to hear ye preach one day, and was verra weel satisfied.'

It was during that same visit that one was impressed by his odd suspicion of pressmen. A conspicuous London clergyman had written some sketches in a daily newspaper of immense circulation, which had attracted much notice. 'Oh,' said the Archbishop, '*he's just a reporter.*' And there an end of him. And though it cannot be recorded, it cannot be forgot, how something condemnatory of the extreme ritual of a well-known London church,

awakened a deep but musical voice of remonstrance. No one can say that that house was divided against itself. But there was a loving diversity of opinion and of liking, which was quite well understood. The good son Craufurd, early taken, thought the Church of the Future would be 'higher than my Father, lower than my Mother.' And standing by the altar in the pretty chapel of a Bishop's house, out of which a beautiful conservatory opened, the good woman said to the Bishop, 'How convenient for bringing in flowers!' The Bishop had no objection. But the Archbishop silently shook his head, though not austere.

Archibald Campbell Tait was born at Harviestoun, in Clackmannanshire, on December 22, 1811. The family had conformed to the National Kirk, but the strain was originally Episcopal. The blood was purely Scottish; and Tait, to the end, was a Scot. Even the accent could never deceive a countryman. I have heard English folk call it English. It was very Scotch indeed. He was well-connected, his grandfather being the Scottish Chief Justice. He was the ninth child, and was born club-footed. This was corrected: but not quite: he was 'never a good processional Bishop.' He was baptized in the drawing-room at Harviestoun, by Dr. MacKnight of the Old Church, Edinburgh: 'a large china vase' being used on such occasions. The Edinburgh house was in Park Place, near the Meadows. His mother, a woman of the sweetest nature, died when Archy was not two years old. The father was a most loveable man; but it was not from him that Tait inherited his caution. First, the High School of Edinburgh: then the New Academy, an admirable school, in the most unattractive surroundings. Here Tait was head-boy in his year: 'Dux.' At sixteen, to Glasgow College. Under the care of the authoritative but devoted Betty he lived in a lodging in College Street, looking on the grim but solemn façade of the old University buildings, all vanished. I have heard him speak with great feeling of those days. Sir Daniel Sandford was Professor of Greek: a very great man in his day. He died on his birthday: forty. I remember well how startled the Archbishop was when told this. It was suggested that Arnold was but forty-six. But he replied, 'Ah, in those years a man does the best work of his life.' Professor Buchanan held the Logic chair: Tait says a man 'without any shining abilities.' Not the ordinary verdict of Glasgow men. Tait worked extremely hard, getting up at 4.30 A.M. He was all his life a pattern of conscientious goodness: like another, he had been 'born before the Fall.' There is a touching little diary, of

hard work so long past. But many Glasgow students worked as hard and did not come to anything. James Halley, who died early, and who was terribly handicapped, 'beat Tait' for the Greek Blackstone: but generally they ran a very equal race. Here he attended 'the Ramshorn Kirk,' now known as St. David's. Finally, he got one of the Snell Exhibitions to Oxford: not improbably for the reason he suggests, the hospitalities of his relation at Garscube. The Snell Exhibitions are held at Balliol; and here Tait, a Tory at Glasgow, gradually turned a Whig. To the end of his life he was for Roman Catholic Emancipation and Endowment. His father, greatly beloved, died while he was at Oxford. In November 1833 he took his B.A. degree: First Class in Classics. Being entirely dependent on his own exertions, he remained at Balliol and took private pupils. But in due time he became Fellow and Tutor of Balliol: and now the struggle of his life was over. He became 'much more of a High Churchman than I was: nor has the Church of Scotland so much of my admiration as in former times.' Quite naturally, he passed into Anglicanism: being confirmed at Oxford as a young man. And on Trinity Sunday, 1836, he was ordained Deacon on his Fellowship by Bagot, Bishop of Oxford. At once, he set himself to clerical duty in the unattractive Baldon, five miles from Oxford: and, still busy with tutorial work, he served that cure diligently for five years.

In these early days, he thought of the Moral Philosophy chair at Glasgow: but more seriously of the Greek, a very considerable prize. I believe that he might have had it, in succession to Sandford. But having taken English orders, he had a difficulty about the University tests, which others did not feel at all. It was the turning-point in his life. Lushington got the Chair, to be succeeded by Jebb, both Senior Classics. Tait's life was to be in England: he determined 'to remain an Episcopalian.' Everyone knows how in March 1841 he was one of the Four Tutors who signed the famous letter concerning Tract 90. The letter was written by Tait. And he wrote, with some asperity, of those 'who regard the Kirk of Scotland as the synagogue of Baal.' He very decidedly preferred Anglicanism, both in government and worship: but, to the end, his heart warmed to the Church of his father, if not of his grandfather. In a little while, the 'great door was opened.' Arnold died on Sunday, June 12, 1842. And of eighteen candidates, after long perplexity between the two youngest, Tait and C. J. Vaughan, the decision was made on July 29, and Stanley, who thought no one really fit to take

Arnold's place, received 'the awful intelligence of your election.' Tait was inaugurated on Sunday, August 14, Stanley preaching the sermon. He wanted some months of being thirty-one.

The story henceforth is within living memories. An adequate Head-master: not a great one. He had the help of a Composition-master from the first. The present Dean of Westminster (Bradley) says, 'His sermons were sometimes really impressive. More than this I can hardly say.' Principal Shairp wrote: 'Tait was certainly by no means a born school-master. He had not himself been at an English public-school.' And he had to get on with assistant-masters, who thought Arnold's place might be occupied, but never filled. On Midsummer day 1843 Tait was married to Catherine Spooner. 'The bright presence of the beautiful young wife' was outstanding at Rugby, and afterwards. Besides other things, she was quite equal to unravelling the most complicated accounts, which had perplexed trained business-men. And this in the early Spring of 1848, when Tait seemed dying, and dictated his farewell to the Sixth Form. He got better: but it was a relief to all when, in October 1849, he accepted the Deanery of Carlisle: being, as Dean Lake writes, 'a Protestant, with a strong dash of the Presbyterian, to the end.' The Dean adds that in the Rugby of Arnold's memory and of Stanley's biography, 'a little cold water, from time to time, kindly administered, was not without its uses.' And the unexcitable, humorous Scot, was eminently the man to administer it.

In May 1850 Tait and his household settled in the Deanery at Carlisle. He did much as Dean: but it was his work on the Oxford University Commission which marked him out for elevation by a Liberal Government. In March and April 1856 the awful blow fell, whose story has been touchingly told: Five of six little daughters died of scarlet fever. Between March 10 and April 10 they were laid to rest: and father and mother were never the same again. And on September 17 Tait writes in his diary that he had this morning been offered the See of London: that now (11 A.M.) he was to take an hour of prayer, though 'I have no doubt of accepting the offer.' 'God knows I have not sought it.' It might have been as well, in stating the considerations which pointed to Tait, to have omitted some lines which yet recall a savage sentence in the *Saturday Review* of those days: Who wrote it? Some think they know. The Prime Minister was Lord Palmerston. And even the friendly biographers say 'it was indeed a bold step on his part to send Dean Tait to London.' He was

consecrated in the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, on November 23, 1856. The well-meaning Lord Shaftesbury was 'alarmed' by the Bishop appointing Stanley one of his Chaplains. 'The Bishop knows not the gulf he is opening for himself.' We all know the good man's way. The wonder is that he did not say (as usual with him) that 'thousands and tens of thousands were startled.' But in a fortnight's time he wrote, 'It is all quite right. I have no more apprehensions.' Stability of mind is a fine thing.

Troubles came, of course. The Divorce Act: Confession: St. George's-in-the-East: are ancient history. The open-air preaching: the services in Exeter Hall and in certain theatres: the evening services in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's; and in Bethnal Green: the Primary Charge, reaching to near five hours, and certainly up to date: the offer in September 1862 of York: are remembered as of yesterday. The controversy as to *Essays and Reviews* brought letters from Dr. Temple which must have been very painful to read. Nobody dreamt that Temple was to be Bishop of London himself. 'You ought not to make it impossible for a friend to calculate on what you will do. I do not care for your severity, I do care for being cheated.' Then came Bishop Colenso, and Bishop Gray. The question of what was called Ritualism grew warm in 1860. All Saints', St. Alban's, St. Peter's, London Docks, became prominent; and a 'religious' newspaper spoke of 'that ecclesiastical bully, the Presbyterian-minded Bishop of London, who has shown himself as narrow-minded a bigot and as unchristian a gentleman as ever disgraced a Bishopric.' In April 1863 the 'Bishop of London's Fund' was founded. Through all, the work of the largest diocese in the world went steadily on. And on November 13, 1868, being at Stonehouse, in Thanet, the letter came from Mr. Disraeli which offered the Primacy. The offer was accepted the same afternoon. The circumstances are quite well known.

Most readers will acknowledge the wisdom of the part taken both by the Archbishop and the Queen in the difficult matter of Irish Disestablishment. On November 18, 1869, when only fifty-eight, a stroke of paralysis fell, from which his entire recovery was something miraculous. Probably the Church owes the introduction of Suffragan Bishops to so striking an instance of fatal over-work. In the earlier days of the Archbishop's illness, Dr. Temple was appointed Bishop of Exeter, having (as Dr. Pusey averred) 'participated in the ruin of countless souls.' Early in 1872 Lord Shaftesbury besought the Lords to take action against Ritualism:

declaring (of course) that 'the fate of the Church of England trembling in the balance.' But he found it 'hopeless, thankless, and fruitless work to reform Church abominations.' Nothing need be said of the Athanasian Creed, save that Tait was violently abused by some. As little of the Public Worship Regulation Act. At the close of May 1877 the Archbishop came to Edinburgh to the funeral of his brother John. He visited the General Assembly, then in session: which rose to receive him. The death of his son, May 25, 1878, was an awful blow: and still heavier that of his wife, who died at Edinburgh on Advent Sunday in the same year. Many know their graves, in Addington Churchyard, side by side: 'Mother and Son.'

The life of dignified drudgery went on a little longer. It was at the Royal Academy Banquet of 1880 (he wrote his speeches for such occasions) that he said, 'I am sure that the general effect of looking day after day upon a hideous building is debasing—I will not say demoralising.' The words have often been quoted to the end of improving Scottish parish kirks. Tait had no knowledge whatever of music. No man (with an ear) who sat by him in Canterbury Cathedral while the Litany was sung, will ever forget it. In a loud speaking voice, the Primate produced a discord which made the nerves tingle. Being at Paris, he 'went almost every day to the Madeleine.' Shade of Lord Shaftesbury! Then at Lambeth, on just this June day, 'Interviews and business all day long till I was nearly mad.' On July 23, 1882, the diary says, 'Still alive, but very shaky.' In August he was from Monday to Thursday at Selsdon Park with the Bishop of Winchester, 'alarmingly feeble.' Yet the humour lingered: To a worrying applicant, 'Tell him he is a consummate ass, but do it very kindly.' But he ran down fast: on Sunday, September 3, he thought he was dying. Some weeks more were given in the quiet sick-room at Addington as the days shortened. But 'it is better I should go now.' Early on a Saturday morning all were summoned. A separate farewell to each: then the benediction in a steady voice. 'And now it is all over. It isn't so very dreadful after all.'

He went at seven on Advent Sunday morning. It was on that day, four years'since, that his wife had gone before him. He was seventy-two. As Chalmers said of another Primate, 'He had passed through the fire of worldly elevation, and the smell of it had not passed upon him.' It was Archy Tait of Glasgow College that died.

A. K. H. B.

Ambitious Mrs. Willatts.

‘WELL, it’s what I consider a very reasonable ambition,’ said Mrs. Underwood, pouring out a second cup of tea for herself. ‘More than that, it’s the sort of ambition that every woman would have to own up to, if she was honest. Men can rise above the rest of their species in a hundred ways: they can be statesmen; they can go to the wars and cover themselves with honourable scars; they can mount up to the top of their professions; a few of them can even make big fortunes. But I should like to know what triumphs are open to us, except conquering hearts and dressing exquisitely and getting the most exclusive society to acknowledge us. With your face you can conquer as many hearts as you please, with your money you can employ the best dressmakers in the world; but to persuade these English aristocrats to come to your house isn’t so easy, and I say that a success of that kind is worth taking some trouble to win.’

Pretty little Mrs. Willatts jerked up her shoulders. ‘I don’t know; seems to me there’s more trouble than success about it, anyway,’ she remarked. ‘You and I have taken trouble enough over this ball, and it’s going to be a failure after all, because that dowdy old dolly of a duchess won’t come.’

‘How do you know that, my dear? Now, I have it on the best authority that she *will* come. Lord George has been moving heaven and earth for you, and he told me this morning that the old lady had given in.’

‘You don’t say!’ exclaimed Mrs. Willatts excitedly. ‘Well, Maggie, you’re a real friend; and Lord George is worth what I’ve—he’s worth more than I thought he was, anyway. Why, this is perfectly splendid!’

These two trans-Atlantic ladies were seated in the drawing-room of the spacious mansion in Pont Street which the younger of them had hired for the season, and which, as she fondly hoped, was destined to be the scene of some magnificent social festivities.

London did not know much about Mrs. Willatts, except that she appeared to have plenty of money; but, on the other hand, it was fairly well acquainted with that lively widow Mrs. Underwood, and was willing enough to accept her word for the fact that the new *protégée* with whom she had taken up her abode this year was 'all right.' The money, at all events, seemed to be all right, and in these latter days high society has learnt to consider wealth as a sufficient passport—especially if the possessor thereof be pretty, amusing, and a citizeness of the United States. The Duchess of Stratford, however, was exceptional. The Duchess had remained faithful to worn-out traditions; she was exclusive, and would have been exclusive even if she had not happened to marry a duke; she wanted to know who people were, and where they came from, and what they had done with their husbands, and put a good many other inconvenient questions before she would consent to shed the light of her countenance upon them; and this was why Mrs. Willatts was so desperately eager to extend her hospitality to one whom she had described truthfully, if not over politely, as a dowdy old dolly.

'Well, I presume she won't do more than walk in and walk out again,' the expectant hostess observed reflectively; 'but if she'll do that, it will answer the purpose. Once I've been recognised by the Duchess of Stratford, I don't see what there'll be to stop me. I should like to see Sam's face when he reads about it in the newspapers! The only trouble is that he won't know the difference between the Duchess of Stratford and other duchesses.'

'He don't know anything at all,' returned Mrs. Underwood contemptuously; 'he don't even know enough to keep from quarrelling with a wife who could have shown him how to get some value for his dollars, as well as her own. Let him stay home and slave at piling up wealth, since that's his notion of enjoyment. Luckily, you're independent of him.'

Mrs. Willatts sighed. 'Why, it stands to reason that I am independent of him,' said she; 'it wasn't any fault of mine that he was too stupid and obstinate to allow what is a fact in law, and I'm sure I didn't want to quarrel—I only insisted upon my rights.'

If there had not been an actual quarrel between Mr. and Mrs. Willatts, there had been a pretty good imitation of one. The young couple had married under circumstances of comparative poverty; but, shortly after their wedding, the bride's father, old Senator Kendrick, had by a happy combination of luck and astuteness acquired an immense fortune, which, on his decease, had

been divided equally between her and her brother. It was on account of the, perhaps unreasonable, claim of Mr. Willatts to have a voice in the investing and expending of his wife's riches that differences had arisen which had resulted in the departure of Mrs. Willatts for Europe and her subsequent partnership with the experienced Mrs. Underwood. Mr. Willatts had professed himself quite contented to stay in America, where he was engaged in business transactions of considerable magnitude, while his wife was fain to enjoy such happiness as may be obtained from the storming and conquest of a social citadel of which the fortifications have admittedly fallen somewhat out of repair.

'I'd like him to be here, though,' she remarked ingenuously, 'so he might see for himself that I don't need any man to show me my way.'

Her wish was fulfilled with a dramatic promptitude which may not have been entirely welcome to her; for hardly were the words out of her mouth when the butler came in and handed her a card, inscribed in bold capitals with the name of 'Samuel T. Willatts,' and respectfully intimated that the gentleman, who had declined to come upstairs, was waiting in the library.

'Mercy!' exclaimed the little lady, tossing the card over to her companion; 'what is to be done now?'

'Send him away,' answered Mrs. Underwood, without a moment's hesitation.

But Mrs. Willatts demurred to the adoption of such drastic measures. 'If Samuel means seeing me, I guess he'll see me,' said she. 'Besides, I don't want he should think I'm afraid of him. Only he shall not come to my ball unless he gives me his solemn promise that he won't wear a white waistcoat or a diamond shirt-stud.'

Mrs. Underwood intimated her opinion that the very least Mr. Willatts could do would be to assent to that modest stipulation, and after her friend had left her she awaited results with some anxiety. Mrs. Underwood was clever, but she was not rich. She appreciated aristocratic society and was appreciated in it; but, unhappily, her private means were inadequate to the entertainment of dukes and duchesses. Since, therefore, she had the present prospect of free and comfortable quarters for several months to come, she could not feel any very ardent desire for a healing over of the breach which existed in the Willatts household, and she was afraid that poor Sally Willatts was rather wanting in backbone. Her apprehensions, however, were apparently ground-

less; for at the expiration of twenty minutes Mrs. Willatts re-entered the room, flushed and excited, and, throwing herself down upon a sofa, exclaimed—

‘I do hate that man! It may be wrong, and I shouldn’t wonder if it was; but it’s true. I abso—*lutely* hate him!’

‘Poor fellow!’ said the relieved Mrs. Underwood, with a laugh; ‘what has he been doing now?’

‘Oh, I don’t know as he *did* much—it’s his way of talking to me and looking at me that makes me so mad! “Well, Sally,” he drawled out, when I offered him my hand, “having a good time over here?” I told him I was having a perfectly lovely time, and he said he was glad to hear it. He had found out all about the ball; but he was afraid he should have to ask me to excuse him that evening, as he should probably have another engagement. He wouldn’t for the world put me to any inconvenience, he said, and as it was uncertain how long he might stay in London, he concluded he had better remain at the Hôtel Métropole.’

‘Why, Sally, you didn’t surely offer to take him into your house?’

‘No, I didn’t; and I thought he might have waited for the invitation before declining it. Then he wanted to know whether I continued to intrust my brother with the entire management of my affairs, and whether I still had full confidence in Henry’s discretion. “A great deal more than I should have in yours,” I answered; at which he grinned and looked as if he could say all manner of things if he chose. Oh, he was just as mean as he could be!’

‘Well,’ observed Mrs. Underwood philosophically, ‘so long as he doesn’t interfere with you, you needn’t trouble about what he says or thinks of your brother.’

‘But, my dear, I believe he will interfere with me; he wouldn’t have been so cool and malicious unless he had had some nasty scheme or other in his head. He has prospered extraordinarily of late, he tells me, and now he has come over to Europe to see London and Paris and Rome and Constantinople, and all the other great cities. But he wouldn’t fix any date for his departure on his Continental trip, and I know just as well as if he had said so that he won’t set out before he has done his best to spoil *my* fun. Oh, Maggie, do you think he could be wicked enough to go around telling all these people that father began life as a factory-hand?’

‘I don’t see how he is to get the chance,’ replied Mrs. Under-

wood, 'and it wouldn't matter a cent if he did. These people don't want to know who your father was, or how he made his money; they wouldn't care much if you were an Englishwoman, and they care far less in the case of an American. A few of them, such as the Duchess of Stratford, might disapprove of your living apart from your husband; but it is about as certain as anything can be that Mr. Willatts won't see the Duchess of Stratford. Don't you be uneasy; with all the will in the world, he can't shake your position. There isn't time.'

She would have been less confident of that had she known a little more about the energetic and enterprising gentleman of whom she spoke. Mr. Willatts was capable, when put to it, of accomplishing a great deal in a very short space of time, and it so happened that he was saying to himself at that moment, as he strolled back towards his hotel, that between then and the date fixed for his wife's ball he ought, by taking prompt action, to be able to 'put through' a certain nefarious design which had just suggested itself to him.

To do him justice, he did not look like a man who was in the habit of entertaining nefarious designs. His blue eyes, though keen and a trifle hard, conveyed an impression of honesty, while the set of his lips, which was scarcely concealed by his short, red-brown beard and moustache, seemed to indicate a philosophical and easy-going disposition. His present situation, however, was of a nature to disturb the serenity of the calmest philosopher, and he had quite made up his mind to effect a radical change in it. Now, when Mr. Willatts made up his mind to do a thing, that thing was very apt to be done.

His first step, after consulting a 'Directory,' was to have himself driven to a certain club, much frequented by the *jeunesse dorée* of the day, and to inquire for Lord George Curtis, who, he was informed presently, was in the card-room, but would be with him in a few minutes. Indeed, he was not made to wait long before Lord George, a tall, well-dressed, well-preserved man of between thirty and forty, came down the staircase, holding his visitor's card and smiling affably.

Mr. Willatts advanced and said: 'How do you do, Lord George Curtis? If convenient, I should be glad to have a word or two with you upon a matter of business.'

'Certainly,' answered the other, leading the way into a small unoccupied room on the ground-floor. 'Won't you sit down? Perhaps you are related to my friend, Mrs. Willatts of Pont Street?'

'More or less so, sir. I have the honour to be the lady's husband, although, as you are probably aware, we are running separate establishments for the present. I understand you have been of great service to Mrs. Willatts, taking her around and presenting her to your aristocracy—in short, generally dry-nursing her.'

'Only too delighted, I am sure, to have been of any little use.'

'And,' continued Mr. Willatts imperturbably, 'it has come to my knowledge that your services have received fairly liberal remuneration from her in the form of cheques.'

The smile faded from Lord George's face and was replaced by an angry frown. 'I am surprised,' said he, 'that a third person should have been told of what I was assured would remain a purely confidential transaction between Mrs. Willatts and myself; but, since that promise seems to have been broken, I had better, perhaps, mention to you that the sums to which you allude represented a loan, not a remuneration. A short while ago I happened, unluckily for myself, to be in financial difficulties, and Mrs. Willatts very kindly offered me temporary assistance. Of course I couldn't possibly have accepted——'

'Excuse me,' interrupted Mr. Willatts; 'this is irrelevant. In the course of business Mrs. Willatts' drafts had to pass through my hands; otherwise I should not have known that she had drawn any in your favour. I have no remarks to make upon the question of loan or payment, nor yet upon your personal behaviour: it don't concern me, anyway. But I presume I may say without offence that, from what I have heard, your financial difficulties are not yet entirely at an end, and——'

'You may say nothing of the sort, sir,' interrupted Lord George in his turn; 'I decline to enter upon any discussion of my private affairs with a stranger. I owe no account of my actions to you; nor, to the best of my belief, does Mrs. Willatts, whom I have always understood to be a lady of independent means. If your object in requesting this interview was to cross-examine me, I am afraid you will gain nothing by protracting it.'

Mr. Willatts remained seated. 'My object,' said he calmly and deliberately, 'was not to be offensive—quite the reverse. I am not here to sit in judgment upon you British aristocrats or upon your methods of dealing with us who come over from the other side to make acquaintance with the cradle of our race. I am a simple business man, Lord George, and I have a simple business proposal to make to you, if you will be so good as to hear me out. Mrs. Willatts, I believe, intends to give a ball on the 26th of this month.'

Lord George stared and nodded.

'Well, I myself have it in contemplation to give a ball on the same date—that is, if I can hire a house or rooms large enough to give it in. That ball, if it takes place, is going to be a big thing; it's going to cost more money than any ball that has been given in this city for the last ten years, and it's going, I hope, to be graced by the presence of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales and all the most prominent members of your London society. But before I can start the thing along I must have some guarantee that these people will accept my invite; and, from what I have heard and read about you, I believe you are the man to assist me. For your assistance I am willing to pay you a much larger sum than you have had from Mrs. Willatts—double that sum, in fact—and I may add that, if you are successful, I shall consider the money well spent and well earned. Excuse my bluntness: as you know, I am only an American and quite unaccustomed to civilised ways of doing things. Now, sir, what do you say?'

Lord George hardly knew what to say. He was a gambler, he was deeply in debt, and he had before this had recourse to divers expedients for raising the wind which had been at least as discreditable as that now suggested to him. Moreover, he was so well known and so popular that he had little doubt of his ability to earn Mr. Willatts' cheque. At the same time, he felt some natural compunction about betraying the lady whose cause he had hitherto devoted all his energies to espousing.

'It is very short notice,' he said at length. 'There is an empty house in Grosvenor Place which you might take for the night, and, assuming money to be no object, I dare say I could manage to secure everybody for you, except the Royalties, who are out of the question. But couldn't you fix a rather later date?'

Mr. Willatts made a gesture of dissent. 'Money is no object,' he replied, 'and, as my wife hasn't contrived to get the Royalties, I can do without them, though I should be glad if you could engage some sort of a Serenity for me. But I need not point out to you that there would be no sense in my giving a ball unless I gave it on the same night as hers.'

After some further discussion Lord George agreed to accept the part assigned to him. He knew, if his interlocutor did not, that in London the clashing of two entertainments does not necessarily imply the *fiasco* of one of them. Besides, he had

really done all that he possibly could do for Mrs. Willatts, and there was something in the notion of impartially befriending her adversary which tickled his sense of humour. The whole thing, too, was such a joke, that his task was likely to be an easy one. People who accepted the wife's hospitality would assuredly wish to compare it with that of her husband; and although the latter would probably have to forego the patronage of the Duchess of Stratford, he would scarcely grieve over an abstention the significance of which he would be protected from realising by his ignorance.

Mr. Willatts, it may be, did not realise the social importance of the Duchess of Stratford, except in so far as that he conceived all duchesses to be socially important; still she was one of the ladies whom he hoped to see at his ball, and indeed she was the only one in all London whom he believed himself capable of inducing to attend it without extraneous aid. For the Duke, who had recently visited the United States and had purchased large tracts of land in the Far West, was extremely desirous of acquiring a certain property which was now in the possession of his would-be entertainer; so that the latter, in the event of his consenting to part with that Naboth's vineyard at a price slightly below its market value, would be fairly entitled to request some small recognition of his generosity. Two days later, therefore, Mr. Willatts, in fulfilment of an appointment which he had previously arranged by letter, betook himself to Stratford House, where, on giving his name, he was at once admitted. In the meantime, he had not allowed the grass to grow under his feet. He had worked hard and had made Lord George work hard also; the house in Grosvenor Place had been secured; orders on a magnificent scale had been issued to sundry tradesmen, while not a few ladies of exalted rank had graciously intimated their intention of looking in on the evening of the 26th to see what the American millionaire could do in the way of eclipsing indigenous plutocrats. Thus Mr. Willatts was fully prepared to transact business with the amiable-looking, grey-bearded personage into whose presence he was shown.

'How do you do, Duke of Stratford?' said he; 'I am obliged to you for according me the favour of a personal interview.'

The Duke said, 'Not at all, I'm sure. Very glad to see you, Mr. Willatts.'

In the course of some subsequent remarks he allowed it to be inferred that he usually left the transaction of business matters to

his agent, but that he had been happy to depart from his general rule in this particular instance.

‘Well,’ observed Mr. Willatts, taking a chair, ‘I guess there is a saving of time in most instances when principals meet.’

He, at all events, could not be accused of wasting time. In less than five minutes he had explained with a clearness which admitted of no suspicion as to his sincerity that he was ready to deal with his noble friend in a truly liberal spirit; and the Duke, while gladly closing with the proposal held out to him, could not help wondering where this apparently keen-witted American’s profit was to come in. But this also was presently explained, without delay or ambiguity.

‘Now, I think you’ll allow, Duke,’ said Mr. Willatts, ‘that this bargain is a pretty advantageous one for you, and if I was to ask a small favour of you at the present moment, I conclude you wouldn’t wish to hurt my feelings by a refusal.’

‘If it is in my power to do anything for you during your stay in London, Mr. Willatts,’ replied the Duke, in the tone of whose voice a shade of apprehension might have been detected, ‘pray command me.’

‘Well, I should think you might come to my ball on the 26th, and bring the Duchess along,’ Mr. Willatts returned. ‘I don’t believe but what you’d enjoy yourself, for it’s going to be done in first-class style, and Lord George Curtis has undertaken that most of your highest-toned people shall be present at it. It’s a sort of caprice of mine, you understand, to say that I have entertained the pick of British society.’

‘Yes, yes; I see,’ answered the Duke. ‘Very natural on your part, no doubt. So George Curtis is managing it for you, is he? George Curtis is——however, I am sure he is fully competent. I will make a point of availing myself of your kind hospitality, Mr. Willatts. As for the Duchess, I hardly know what her engagements are; but——’

‘I should be glad if you could go a step further and make a point of it that the Duchess should kindly lend me her support,’ said Mr. Willatts; and there was a look in his face which seemed to indicate that the transfer which had just been agreed upon had not yet been formally ratified. The Duke perceived this, and reflected that he was, after all, master in his own house. Besides, what did it signify? It wasn’t as if Mr. Willatts contemplated taking up his abode in England. He, therefore, boldly committed himself to a promise that the Duchess should accompany him on

the evening of the 26th, and his visitor, after gravely thanking him, withdrew.

During the interval which elapsed between that day and the 26th of the month Mrs. Willatts saw no more of her husband ; but of course she heard what everybody very soon began to talk about, and deep was her despair on learning the nature of the design by means of which he proposed to put her to confusion.

‘Didn’t I tell you that that man had come over here on purpose to take his revenge upon me?’ she exclaimed to her confidant. ‘I don’t believe there’s a meaner creature in the world than Samuel Willatts ! He’s so wealthy that he can easily afford to outshine me, and he would rather spend his last cent than fail to wreck my ball. I’m as certain of that as I am that London isn’t big enough to hold him and me.’

Mrs. Underwood reassured her. Mrs. Underwood was persuaded that London, and even London society, afforded space enough to accommodate two rivals ; and in this view she was warmly backed up by Lord George Curtis, whose treachery had not transpired. That enterprising individual was in high spirits ; for he saw his way, not only to pocketing a comfortable sum of money, but also to deserving it, which is always a satisfactory state of things to the conscientious labourer. All the ladies to whom he had spoken had been struck and diverted by the piquancy of the idea that husband and wife were bidding against one another for their favour. Not one of them had hesitated to accept the invitation of the former, and Lord George, feeling that he had done his duty impartially to both sides, was able to look forward to the issue with all the calmness and legitimate curiosity of a judicious umpire. As far as he could predict, probabilities pointed to a drawn game as the result of all this lavish expenditure.

But no human being can predict with confidence the result of any game in which the forces on either side appear to be pretty equally balanced. A trifle usually turns the scale, and very likely it was a comparative trifle, or two comparative trifles, which turned it in favour of Mr. Willatts on this occasion. Firstly, almost all of those who intended to put in an appearance at both houses had chanced to decide that they would go on from Grosvenor Place to Pont Street, and they found Grosvenor Place too attractive to be left in a hurry. Secondly, the Duchess of Stratford was pleased to remain for an hour and a half in the temporary abode of Mr. Willatts ; after which she drove straight home, notwithstanding the half-promise which she had caused to be conveyed to that

gentleman's wife. The Duchess, on hearing what her husband wished her to do, had kicked a little, but had finally yielded to his entreaties and to his assurances that the man was a very respectable sort of man in his way, besides being quite phenomenally honest. The Duchess, however, was a strait-laced old lady. It appeared to her that Mr. and Mrs. Willatts could not both of them be respectable, inasmuch as they lived apart, and that, if she must needs show civility to the one, she could not choose but turn the cold-shoulder upon the other. Moreover, she did not lose sight of the fact that the husband was a bird of passage, whereas the wife, as she had been informed, had some idea of taking up a permanent residence in London.

For the rest, the Duchess, like everybody else, was pleased and amazed by the splendour of Mr. Willatts' hospitality. The hall and staircase of the house in Grosvenor Place were simply a magnificent orchid-show, such as one might have expected to be charged half a crown for the privilege of admiring; the floral decorations of the ball-room must have cost a small fortune; the music was the very best that money could procure; and, in view of all this ungrudging outlay, how could an appreciative guest help remaining to see whether the supper would prove to be in keeping with its surroundings? The Duchess of Stratford stayed to supper; and, although neither eating nor drinking had much fascination for her personally, she was fain to confess that never in her experience had anything been better done.

Had it suited her convenience to wait for the cotillon which took place afterwards, she must have admitted that in this also the open-handed American scored an undeniable success. Perhaps it may not be the best of taste to offer presents of costly jewellery to ladies with whom one is barely acquainted; but then we live in an age which is not precisely distinguished for good taste, and if the ladies like the bracelets and one has the means of providing them with what they like, why should one not retain the pleasure of their company by that means as well as by another? Mr. Willatts retained his guests so long that a very considerable number of them never found their way to Pont Street at all. It was broad daylight when, being left alone in the scene of deserted revelry, he lighted a cigar and remarked placidly—

'Well, if this don't make Sally gnash her teeth and tear her hair, nothing will.'

Poor Mrs. Willatts did not display her chagrin in so violent a manner; but between two and three o'clock in the morning she

did sit down and cry. Her ball—the ball upon which she had expended so much money and trouble and diplomacy—had been a dead failure. At no moment had her rooms been full; throughout the evening there had been a dearth of men; the ladies who had come had remained but a short time, and had, she thought, looked askance at her; worst of all, the most influential, including the Duchess of Stratford, had pointedly absented themselves.

‘Maggie,’ said she to Mrs. Underwood in a tragic voice, ‘I have been fairly and squarely beaten. I shall give up London and go to Paris. Sam don’t know a word of French; and besides, I shouldn’t suppose there could be another nation on earth so brutal and insolent as this. I tell you, Maggie, I wouldn’t have anything more to say to these English people if they went down on their knees to me!’

Mrs. Underwood advised half a bottle of champagne and bed. She was too judicious to offer any other counsel under the distressing circumstances, although she was not without hope that this first reverse might be retrieved by subsequent victories.

But Mrs. Willatts was convinced—and probably she was right—that, so far as London society was concerned, she had shot her bolt and missed her mark. Such sleep as she was able to obtain did not serve to raise her spirits, and when she went downstairs to breakfast at half-past ten in the morning, she was neither surprised nor angered at being informed that her husband was waiting to see her in the library. She had felt sure that he would come to glory over her in her discomfiture.

‘I hope you’re satisfied, anyway,’ was the greeting with which she accosted him. ‘You have made me ridiculous and you have driven me out of England. Perhaps you’ll leave me in peace now.’

‘Well, I guess I’ve shown you that the British aristocracy don’t amount to much,’ said Mr. Willatts tranquilly. ‘As for peace, I’m not sure whether you’ll consent to that, though it’s what I wish for. Seen the newspapers this morning? If you have, you may have noticed among the cablegrams from the United States an announcement of the bankruptcy of Henry R. Kendrick of New York.’

Mrs. Willatts’ heart stood still and the floor seemed to rise and fall before her. ‘You don’t tell me!’ she exclaimed involuntarily. ‘Then I am ruined!’

‘Why, no,’ answered her husband; ‘you are not ruined, although some folks might say that you deserved to be for having given a

free hand to Henry R. Kendrick. I bought that gentleman up a while ago, horse, foot and dragoons, and the consequence is that you are my creditor to-day, instead of being his—which is fortunate for you. I shouldn't want to be one of Henry R. Kendrick's creditors.'

There was an interval of silence; after which Mrs. Willatts said, in a very humble voice, 'Samuel, I believe I've acted like a fool. I ought to have listened to you when you told me that Henry wasn't to be trusted.'

'Well,' replied Mr. Willatts, with judicial composure, 'it can't be denied that trouble and expense would have been spared if you had.'

'And, of course, you aren't speaking seriously when you talk about my being your creditor. You must know as well as I do that I couldn't legally claim a cent from you.'

'Oh, I guess you could. I should have to see the lawyers before I could say positively; but, however that may be, you have a moral claim, which I don't dispute. Your money is safe enough, and I'll hand the whole amount over to your bankers to-morrow, if you say so; only it seems to me that you might do worse than consult me before you invest it a second time.'

'I presume you have had losses over this affair, Samuel,' said Mrs. Willatts, after another period of silence.

'Nothing to hurt me, Sally; nothing but what I should esteem as clear gains, if they enabled you and me to make a fresh start.'

'How a fresh start? We fell out because you wanted to boss the whole show, and for all your generosity I'm not going to admit that I hadn't a right to do as I pleased with my own.'

'Well,' answered Mr. Willatts, 'I've concluded to waive my pretensions. I should like to have the privilege of advising you; but I don't insist upon it. All I wanted to prove to you was, that a woman who elects to play her own game wants to be a strong-minded sort of woman like your friend Mrs. Underwood; and I'm free to confess that, if you were another Mrs. Underwood, I shouldn't be here for the purpose of begging you to let bygones be bygones and sail for New York with me next week.'

Mrs. Underwood, as may well be believed, was both distressed and disappointed when her friend informed her somewhat shamefacedly, half an hour later, that the above proposition had been acceded to. She could not resist saying: 'I knew from the first how it would be, Sally. All along you have been just crazy to get your husband back; and now it is he who has forced you to go

back to him. I only hope you won't be sorry before you are much older, that's all.'

Mrs. Underwood, however, was not left entirely without consolation; for Mr. Willatts, who never did things by halves, not only granted her the free use of the house in Pont Street for the remainder of the London season, but handed her over a substantial cheque in defrayal of necessary expenses; and she has made such good use of her time and opportunities that she is upon the point of contracting a matrimonial alliance with an Irish viscount. As for Mr. and Mrs. Willatts, they and their bickerings and their entertainments were, of course, completely forgotten many months ago.

W. E. NORRIS.

The Strange Instincts of Cattle.

MY purpose in this paper is to discuss a group of curious and useless emotional instincts of social animals, which have not yet been properly explained. Excepting two of the number, placed first and last in the list, they are not related in their origin; consequently they are here grouped together arbitrarily, only for the reason that we are very familiar with them on account of their survival in our domestic animals, and because they are, as I have said, useless; also because they resemble each other, among the passions and actions of the lower animals, in their effect on our minds. This is in all cases unpleasant, and sometimes exceedingly painful, as when species that rank next to ourselves in their developed intelligence and organised societies, such as elephants, monkeys, dogs, and cattle, are seen under the domination of impulses, in some cases resembling insanity, and in others simulating the darkest passions of man.

These instincts are:—

(1) The excitement caused by the smell of blood, noticeable in horses and cattle among our domestic animals, and varying greatly in degree, from an emotion so slight as to be scarcely perceptible to the greatest extremes of rage or terror.

(2) The angry excitement roused in some animals when a scarlet or bright red cloth is shown to them. So well known is this apparently insane instinct in our cattle that it has given rise to a proverb and metaphor familiar in a variety of forms to everyone.

(3) The persecution of a sick or weakly animal by its companions.

(4) The sudden deadly fury that seizes on the herd or family at the sight of a companion in extreme distress. Herbivorous mammals at such times will trample and gore the distressed one to death. In the case of wolves, and other savage-tempered

carnivorous species, the distressed fellow is frequently torn to pieces and devoured on the spot.

To take the first two together. When we consider that blood is red; that the smell of it is, or may be, or has been, associated with that vivid hue in the animal's mind; that blood, seen and smelt, is or has been associated with the sight of wounds and with cries of pain and rage or terror from the wounded or captive animal, there appears to be some reason for connecting these two instinctive passions as having the same origin—namely, terror and rage caused by the sight of a member of the herd struck down and bleeding, or struggling for life in the grasp of an enemy. I do not mean to say that such an image is actually present in the animal's mind, but that the inherited or instinctive passion is one in kind and in its working with the passion of the animal when experience and reason was its guide.

But the more I consider the point the more am I inclined to regard those two instincts as separate in their origin, although I retain the belief that cattle and horses and several wild animals are violently excited by the smell of blood for the reason just given—namely, their inherited memory associates the smell of blood with the presence among them of some powerful enemy that threatens their life. To this point I shall return when dealing with the last and most painful of the instincts I am considering.

The following incident will show how violently this blood passion sometimes affects cattle, when they are permitted to exist in a half-wild condition, as on the Pampas. I was out with my gun one day, a few miles from home, when I came across a patch on the ground where the grass was pressed or trodden down and stained with blood. I concluded that some thievish gauchos had slaughtered a fat cow there on the previous night, and, to avoid detection, had somehow managed to carry the whole of it away on their horses. As I walked on, a herd of cattle, numbering about three hundred, appeared moving slowly on towards a small stream a mile away; they were travelling in a thin long line, and would pass the blood-stained spot at a distance of seven to eight hundred yards, but the wind from it would blow across their track. When the tainted wind struck the leaders of the herd they instantly stood still, raising their heads, then broke out into loud excited bellows; and finally turning they started off at a fast trot, following up the scent in a straight line, until they arrived at the place where one of their kind had met its death. The contagion

spread, and before long all the cattle were congregated on the fatal spot, and began moving round in a dense mass, bellowing continually.

It may be remarked here that the animal has a peculiar language on occasions like this: it emits a succession of short bellowing cries, like excited exclamations, followed by a very loud cry, alternately sinking into a hoarse murmur, and rising to a kind of scream that grates harshly on the sense. Of the ordinary 'cow-music' I am a great admirer, and take as much pleasure in it as in the cries and melody of birds and the sound of the wind in trees; but this performance of cattle excited by the smell of blood is most distressing to hear.

The animals that had forced their way into the centre of the mass to the spot where the blood was, pawed the earth, and dug it up with their horns, and trampled each other down in their frantic excitement. It was terrible to see and hear them. The action of those on the border of the living mass in perpetually moving round in a circle with dolorous bellowings, was like that of the women in an Indian village when a warrior dies, and all night they shriek and howl with simulated grief, going round and round the dead man's hut in an endless procession.

The 'bull and red rag' instinct, as it may be called, comes next in order.

It is a familiar fact that brightness in itself powerfully attracts most if not all animals. The higher mammals are affected in the same way as birds and insects, although not in the same degree. This fact partly explains the rage of the bull. A scarlet flag fluttering in the wind or lying on the grass attracts his attention powerfully, as it does that of other animals; but though curious about the nature of the bright object it does not anger him. His anger is excited—and this is the whole secret of the matter—when the colour is flaunted by a man; when it forces him to fix his attention on a man, *i.e.* an animal of another species that rules or drives him, and that he fears, but with only a slight fear, which may at any moment be overcome by his naturally bold aggressive disposition. Not only does the vivid colour compel him to fix his attention on the being that habitually interferes with his liberty, and is consequently regarded with unfriendly eyes, but it also produces the illusion on his mind that the man is near him, that he is approaching him in an aggressive manner: it is an insult, a challenge, which, being of so explosive a temper, he is not slow to accept.

On the Pampas I was once standing with some gauchos at the gate of a corral into which a herd of half-wild cattle had just been driven. One of the men, to show his agility, got off his horse and boldly placed himself in the centre of the open gate. His action attracted the attention of one of the nearest cows, and lowering her horns she began watching him in a threatening manner. He then suddenly displayed the scarlet lining of his poncho, and instantly she charged him furiously : with a quick movement to one side he escaped her horns, and then, when we had driven her back, resumed his former position and challenged her again in the same way. The experiment was repeated not less than half a dozen times, and always with the same result. The cattle were all in a savage temper, and would have instantly charged him on his placing himself before them on foot without the display of scarlet cloth, but their fear of the mounted men, standing with lassoes in their hand on either side of him, kept them in check. But whenever the attention of any one individual among them was forcibly drawn to him by the display of vivid colour, and fixed on him alone, the presence of the horsemen was forgotten and fear was swallowed by rage.

It is a fact, I think, that most animals that exhibit angry excitement when a scarlet rag is flourished aggressively at them, are easily excited to anger at all times. Domestic geese and turkeys may be mentioned among birds : they do not fly at a grown person, but they will often fly at a child that challenges them in this way ; and it is a fact that they do not at any time fear a child very much and will sometimes attack one without being challenged. I think that the probability of the view I have taken is increased by another fact—namely, that the sudden display of scarlet colour sometimes affects timid animals with an extreme fear, just as, on the other hand, it excites those that are bold and aggressive to anger. Domestic sheep, for instance, that vary greatly in disposition in different races or breeds, and even in different individuals, may be affected in the two opposite ways, some exhibiting extreme terror and others only anger at a sudden display of scarlet colour by the shepherd or herder.

The persecution of a sick animal by its companions comes next under consideration.

It will have been remarked, with surprise by some readers, no doubt, that I have set down as two different instincts this persecution of a sick or weakly individual by its fellows, and the sudden deadly rage that sometimes impels the herd to turn upon and

destroy a wounded or distressed companion. It is usual for writers on the instincts of animals to speak of them as one : and I presume that they regard this sudden deadly rage of several individuals against a companion as merely an extreme form of the common persecuting instinct or impulse. They are not really one, but are as distinct in origin and character as it is possible for any two instincts to be. The violent and fatal impulse starts simultaneously into life and action, and is contagious, affecting all the members of the herd like a sudden madness. The other is neither violent nor contagious : the persecution is intermittent ; it is often confined to one or to a very few members of the herd, and seldom joined in by the chief member, the leader or head to whom all the others give way.

Concerning this head of the herd, or flock, or pack, it is necessary to say something more. Some gregarious animals, particularly birds, live together in the most perfect peace and amity ; and here no leader is required, because in their long association together as a species in flocks they have attained to a oneness of mind, so to speak, which causes them to move or rest, and to act at all times harmoniously together, as if controlled and guided by an extraneous force. I may mention that the kindly instinct in animals, which is almost universal between male and female in the vertebrates, is most apparent in these harmoniously acting birds. Thus, in La Plata, I have remarked, in more than one species, that a lame or sick individual, unable to keep pace with the flock and find its food, has not only been waited for, but in some cases some of the flock have constantly attended it, keeping close to it both when flying and on the ground ; and, I have no doubt, feeding it just as they would have fed their young.

Naturally among such no one member is of more consideration than another. But among mammals such equality and harmony is rare. The instinct of one and all is to lord it over the others, with the result that one more powerful or domineering gets the mastery, to keep it thereafter as long as he can. The lower animals are, in this respect, very much like us ; and in all kinds that are at all fierce-tempered the mastery of one over all, and of a few under him over the others, is most salutary ; indeed, it is inconceivable that they should be able to exist together under any other system.

On cattle-breeding establishments on the Pampas, where it is usual to keep a large number of fierce-tempered dogs, I have observed these animals a great deal, and presume that they are

very much like feral dogs and wolves in their habits. Their quarrels are incessant ; but when a fight begins the head of the pack as a rule rushes to the spot, whereupon the fighters separate and march off in different directions, or else cast themselves down and deprecate their tyrant's wrath with abject gestures and whines. If the combatants are both strong and have worked themselves into a mad rage before their head puts in an appearance, it may go hard with him : they know him no longer, and all he can do is to join in the fray ; then, if the fighters turn on him he may be so injured that his power is gone, and the next best dog in the pack takes his place. The hottest contests are always between dogs that are well matched ; neither will give place to the other and so they fight it out ; but from the foremost in strength and power down to the weakest there is a gradation of authority ; each one knows just how far he can go, which companion he can bully when he is in a bad temper or wishes to assert himself, and to which he must humbly yield in his turn. In such a state the weakest one must always yield to all the others, and cast himself down, seeming to call himself a slave and worshipper of any other member of the pack that chooses to snarl at him, or command him to give up his bone with a good grace.

This masterful or domineering temper, so common among social mammals, is the cause of the persecution of the sick and weakly. When an animal begins to ail he can no longer hold his own : he ceases to resent the occasional ill-natured attacks made on him ; his non-combative condition is quickly discovered, and he at once drops down to a place below the lowest ; it is common knowledge in the herd that he may be buffeted with impunity by all, even by those that have hitherto suffered buffets but have given none. But judging from my own observation, this persecution is not, as a rule, severe, and is seldom fatal.

It is often the case that a sick or injured animal withdraws and hides himself from the herd ; the instinct of the 'stricken deer' this might be called. But I do not think that we need assume that the ailing individual goes away to escape the danger of being ill-used by his companions. He is sick and drooping and consequently unfit to be with the healthy and vigorous ; that is the simplest and probably the true explanation of his action ; although in some cases he might be driven from them by persistent rough usage. However peaceably gregarious mammals may live together, and however fond of each

other's company they may be, they do not, as a rule, treat each other gently. Furthermore, their games are exceedingly rough, and require that they shall be in a vigorous state of health to escape injury. Horned animals have no buttons to the sharp weapons they prod and strike each other with in a sportive spirit. I have often witnessed the games of wild and half-wild horses with astonishment; for it seemed that broken bones must result from the sounding kicks they freely bestowed on one another. This roughness itself would be a sufficient cause for the action of the individual, sick and out of tune and untouched by the glad contagion of the others, in escaping from them; and to leave them would be to its advantage (and to that of the race), since, if not fatally injured or sick unto death, its chances of recovery to perfect health would be thereby greatly increased.

It remains now to speak of that seemingly most cruel of instincts which stands last on my list. It is very common among gregarious animals that are at all combative in disposition, and still survives in our domestic cattle, although very rarely witnessed in England. My first experience of it was just before I had reached the age of five years. I was not at that early period trying to find out any of Nature's secrets, but the scene I witnessed printed itself very vividly on my mind, so that I can recall it as well as if my years had been five-and-twenty; perhaps better. It was on a summer's evening, and I was out by myself at some distance from the house, playing about the roots of some old trees; on the other side of the trees the cattle, just returned from pasture, were gathered on the bare level ground. Hearing a great commotion among them, I climbed on to one of the high exposed roots, and, looking over, saw a cow on the ground, apparently unable to rise, moaning and bellowing in a distressed way, while a number of her companions were crowding round and goring her. I remember that I was very much frightened at what I saw, and that I ran home as fast as I could.

What is the meaning of such an instinct? Darwin has but few words on the subject. 'Can we believe,' he says, in his posthumous 'Essay on Instinct,' 'when a wounded herbivorous animal returns to its own herd and is then attacked and gored, that this cruel and very common instinct is of any service to the species?' At the same time, he hints that such an instinct might in some circumstances be useful, and his hint has been developed into the current belief among naturalists on the subject. Here it is, in Dr. Romanes' words: 'We may readily

imagine that the instinct displayed by many herbivorous animals of goring sick and wounded companions, is really of use in countries where the presence of weak members in a herd is a source of danger to the herd from the prevalence of wild beasts.' Here it is assumed that the sick are set upon and killed, but it is not a fact; sickness and decay from age or some other cause are slow things, and increase imperceptibly, so that the sight of a drooping member grows familiar to the herd, as does that of a member with some malformation, or unusual shade of colour, or altogether white, as in the case of an albino.

Sick and weak members, as we have seen, while subject to some ill-treatment from their companions (only because they can be ill-treated with impunity), do not rouse the herd to a deadly animosity; the violent and fatal attack is often as not made on a member in perfect health and vigour and unwounded, although, owing to some accident, in great distress, and perhaps danger, at the moment.

The instinct is, then, not only useless but actually detrimental; and, this being so, the action of the herd in destroying one of its members is not even to be regarded as an instinct proper, but rather as an aberration of an instinct, a blunder, into which animals sometimes fall when excited to action in unusual circumstances.

The first thing that strikes us is that in these wild abnormal moments of social animals they are acting in violent contradiction to the whole tenor of their lives; that in turning against a distressed fellow they oppose themselves to the law of their being, to the whole body of instincts, primary and secondary, and habits, which have made it possible for them to exist together in communities. It is, I think, by reflecting on the abnormal character of such an action that we are led to a true interpretation of this 'dark saying of Nature.'

Every one is familiar with Bacon's famous passage about the dog, and the noble courage which that animal puts on when 'maintained by a man; who is to him in place of a God, or *melior natura*; which courage is manifestly such as that creature, without the confidence of a better nature than its own, could never attain.' Not so. The dog is a social animal, and acts instinctively in concert with his fellows; and the courage he manifests is of the family, not the individual. In the domestic state the man he is accustomed to associate with and obey stands to him in the place of the controlling pack, and to his mind, which is canine

and not human, *is* the pack. A similar 'noble courage,' greatly surpassing that exhibited on all other occasions, is displayed by an infinite number of mammals and birds of gregarious habits, when repelling the attacks of some powerful and dangerous enemy, or when they rush to the rescue of one of their captive fellows. Concerning this rage and desperate courage of social animals in the face of an enemy, we see (1) that it is excited by the distressed cries, or by the sight of a member of the herd or family flying from or struggling in the clutches of an enemy; (2) that it affects animals when a number of individuals are together, and is eminently contagious, like fear, that communicates itself, quick as lightning, from one to another until all are in a panic, and like the joyous emotion that impels the members of a herd or flock to rush simultaneously into play.

Now, it is a pretty familiar fact that animals acting instinctively, as well as men acting intelligently, have at times their delusions and their illusions, and see things falsely, and are moved to action by a false stimulus to their own disadvantage. When the individuals of a herd or family are excited to a sudden deadly rage by the distressed cries of one of their fellows, or by the sight of its bleeding wounds and the smell of its blood, or when they see it frantically struggling on the ground, or in the cleft of a tree or rock, as if in the clutches of a powerful enemy, they do not turn on it to kill but to rescue it.

In whatever way the rescuing instinct may have risen, whether simply through natural selection or, as is more probable, through an intelligent habit becoming fixed and hereditary, its effectiveness depends altogether on the emotion of overmastering rage excited in the animal—rage against a tangible enemy, visible or invisible, and excited by the cries or struggles of a suffering companion; clearly, then, it could not provide against the occasional rare accidents that animals meet with, which causes them to act precisely in the way they do when seized or struck down by an enemy. An illusion is the result of the emotion similar to the illusion produced by vivid expectation in ourselves, which has caused many a man to see in a friend and companion the adversary he looked to see, and to slay him in his false-seeing anger.

An illusion just as great, leading to action equally violent, but ludicrous rather than painful to witness, may be seen in dogs, when encouraged by a man to the attack, and made by his cries and gestures to expect that some animal they are accustomed to hunt is about to be unearthed or overtaken; and if, when they

are in this disposition, he cunningly exhibits and sets them on a dummy, made perhaps of old rags and leather and stuffed with straw, they will seize, worry, and tear it to pieces with the greatest fury, and without the faintest suspicion of its true character.

That wild elephants will attack a distressed fellow seemed astonishing to Darwin, when he remembered the case of an elephant after escaping from a pit helping its fellow to escape also. But it is precisely the animals, high or low in the organic scale, that are social, and possess the instinct of helping each other, that will on occasions attack a fellow in misfortune—such an attack being no more than a blunder of the helping instinct.

Felix de Azara records a rather cruel experiment on the temper of some tame rats confined in a cage. The person who kept them caught the tail of one of the animals and began sharply pinching it, keeping his hand concealed under the cage. Its cries of distress and struggles to free itself greatly excited the other rats, and, after rushing wildly round for some moments, they flew at their distressed companion, and fixing their teeth in its throat quickly despatched it. In this case, if the hand that held the tail had been visible in the cage the bites would have been inflicted on it; but no enemy was visible, yet the fury and impulse to attack an enemy was present in the animals. In such circumstances the excitement must be discharged, the instinct obeyed, and in the absence of any other object of attack the illusion is produced, and it discharges itself on the struggling companion. It is sometimes seen in dogs, when three or four or five are near together, that if one suddenly utters a howl or cry of pain, when no man is near it and no cause apparent, the others run to it, and seeing nothing, turn round and attack each other. Here the exciting cause—the cry for help—is not strong enough to produce the illusion which is sometimes fatal to the suffering member; but each dog mistakenly thinks that the others, or one of the others, inflicted the injury, and his impulse is to take the part of his injured companion. If the cry for help—caused perhaps by a sudden cramp or the prick of a thorn—is not very sharp or intense, the other dogs will not attack, but merely look and growl at each other in a suspicious way.

To go back to Azara's anecdote. Why, it may be asked—and the question has been put to me in conversation—if killing a distressed companion is of no advantage to the race, and if something must be attacked, why did not the rats in this case attack

the cage they were shut in and bite at the wood-work and wires ? Or, in the case related some months ago in this magazine by Mr. Andrew Lang, in which the members of a herd of cattle in Scotland turned with sudden amazing fury on one of the animals that had got wedged between two rocks and was struggling with distressed bellowings to free itself, why did they not attack the imprisoning rocks instead of goring their unfortunate comrade to death ? For it is well known that animals will on occasions turn angrily upon and attack inanimate objects that cause them injury or hinder them in any way. And we know that this mythic faculty—the mind's projection of itself into visible nature—survives in ourselves, that there are exceptional moments in our lives when it comes back to us. No one, for instance, would be astonished to hear that any man, even a philosopher, had angrily kicked away or imprecated a stool or other inanimate object against which he had accidentally barked his shins. The answer is that there is no connexion between these two things—the universal mythic faculty of the mind, and that bold violent instinct of social animals of rushing to the rescue of a stricken or distressed companion, which has a definite, a narrow purpose—namely, to fall upon an enemy endowed not merely with the life and intelligence common to all things, including rocks, trees, and waters, but with animal form and motion.

I had intended in this place to give other instances, observed in several widely-separated species, including monkeys ; but it is not necessary, as I consider that all the facts, however varied, are covered by the theory I have suggested. Even a fact like the one mentioned in this article of cattle madly digging up the ground on which the blood of one of their kind had been spilt ; also such a fact as that of wild cattle or other animals caught in a trap or enclosure turning upon and destroying each other in their frenzy ; and the fact that some fierce-tempered carnivorous mammals will devour the companion they have killed. It is an instinct of animals like wolves and peccaries to devour an enemy that they have overcome and slain. Thus, when the jaguar captures a peccary out of a drove, and does not succeed in quickly escaping with his prize into a tree, he is instantly attacked and slain, and then consumed, even to the skin and bones. This is the wolf's and the peccary's instinct ; and the devouring of one of their own companions is the inevitable result of the mistake made in the first place of attacking and killing it. In no other circumstances—not even when starving—will they prey on their own species.

If the explanation I have offered should seem a true or highly probable one, it will, I feel sure, prove acceptable to many lovers of animals, who, regarding this seemingly ruthless instinct, not as an aberration but as in some vague way advantageous to animals in their struggle for existence, are yet unable to think of it without pain and horror; indeed, I know those who refuse to think of it at all, who would gladly disbelieve it if they could.

It should be a relief to them to be able to look on it no longer as something ugly and hateful, a blot on Nature, but as an illusion, a mistake, an unconscious crime, so to speak, that has for its motive the noblest passion that animals know—that sublime courage and daring which they exhibit in defence of a distressed companion. This fiery spirit in animals, which makes them forget their own safety, moves our hearts by its close resemblance to one of the most highly-prized human virtues; just as we are moved to intellectual admiration by the wonderful migratory instinct in birds that simulates some of the highest achievements of the mind of man. And we know that this beautiful instinct is also liable to mistakes—that many travellers leave us annually never to return. Such a mistake was undoubtedly the cause of the late visitation of Pallas' sand grouse; owing perhaps to some unusual atmospheric or dynamic condition, or to some change in the nervous system of the birds, they deviated widely from their usual route, to scatter in countless thousands over the whole of Europe and perish slowly in climates not suited to them; while others, overpassing the cold strange continent, sped on over colder stranger seas, to drop at last like *aérolites*, quenching their lives in the waves.

Whether because it is true, as Professor Freeman and some others will have it, that humanity is a purely modern virtue; or because the doctrine of Darwin, by showing that we are related to other forms of life, that our best feelings have their roots low down in the temper and instincts of the social species, has brought us nearer in spirit to the inferior animals, it is certain that our regard for them has grown, and is growing, and that new facts and fresh inferences that make us think more highly of them are increasingly welcome.

W. H. HUDSON.

The Three Fates.¹

BY F. MARION CRAWFORD, AUTHOR OF 'MR. ISAACS,'
'DR. CLAUDIUS,' &C.

CHAPTER X.

CONSTANCE did not find Johnson without asking her way many times, and losing it nearly as often, in the huge new building which was the residence and habitation of the newspaper. Nor did her appearance fail to excite surprise and admiration in the numerous reporters, messengers, and other members of the establishment who had glimpses of her as she passed rapidly on, from corridor to corridor. It happened that Johnson was in the room allotted to his department, which was not always the case at that hour, for he did much of his work at home.

'Come in!' he said sharply, without looking up from his writing. 'Well—what is it? Oh!' as he saw Miss Fearing standing before him. 'I beg your pardon, madam!'

'Are you Mr. Johnson? Am I disturbing you?' Constance asked. She was beginning to be surprised at her own audacity, and almost wished she had not come.

'Yes, madam. My name is Johnson, and my time is at your service,' said the pale young man, moving forward his best chair and offering it to her.

'Thank you. I will not trouble you long. I have here a novel in manuscript——'

Johnson interrupted her promptly.

'Excuse me, madam, but to avoid all misunderstanding I should tell you frankly from the first that we never publish fiction——'

'No, of course not,' Constance broke in. 'Let me tell my story.'

¹ Copyright 1891, by F. Marion Crawford.

Johnson bowed his head and assumed an attitude of attention.

'A friend of yours,' the young girl continued, 'has written this book. His name is Mr. George Winton Wood——'

'I know him very well.' Johnson wondered why George had not come himself, and wondered especially how he happened to dispose of so young and beautiful an ambassadress.

'Yes, he has often told me about you,' said Constance. 'Very well. He has written this novel, and I have read it. He thinks it is not worth publishing, and I think it is. I want to ask a great favour of you. Will you read it yourself?'

The pale young man hesitated. He was intensely conscientious, and he feared there was something queer about the business.

'Pardon me,' he said, 'does Mr. Wood know that you have brought it to me?'

'No, indeed. I would not have him know it for the world!'

'Then I would rather not——'

'But you must!' Constance exclaimed energetically. 'It is splendid, and he wants to burn it. It will make his reputation in a day, I assure you it will! And, besides, I would not promise him not to show it. Please, please, Mr. Johnson.'

'Well, if you are quite sure there is no promise.'

'Oh, quite, quite sure. And will you give me your opinion very soon? If you begin to read it you will not be able to lay it down.'

Johnson smiled as he thought of the hundreds of manuscripts he had read for publishers. He had never found much difficulty in laying aside any of them.

'It is true,' Constance replied. 'It is a great book. There has been nothing like it for ever so many years.'

'Very well, madam. Give me the screed and I will read it. When shall I send, or would you rather——'

He stopped, not knowing whether she wished to give her name. Constance hesitated too, and blushed faintly.

'I am Miss Fearing,' she said. 'I live in Washington Square. Will you write down the address? Come and see me, or are you too busy?'

'I will bring you the manuscript the day after to-morrow, Miss Fearing.'

'Oh please, yes. Not later, because I cannot go out of town until I know; I mean I want to go to Newport as soon as possible. Come after five. Will you? I mean if it is not giving you really too much trouble.'

'Not in the least, Miss Fearing,' said the pale young man with alacrity. He was thinking that, for the sake of conversing a quarter of an hour with such an exceedingly amiable young lady, he would put himself to vastly more trouble than was involved in stopping at Washington Square on his way up town in the afternoon.

'Thank you. You are so kind. Good-bye, Mr. Johnson.' She held out her hand, but Johnson seized his hat and prepared to accompany her.

'Let me take you to the Elevated, Miss Fearing,' he said.

'Thank you very much, but I have a carriage down stairs,' said Constance. 'If you would show me the way—it is so very complicated.'

'Certainly, Miss Fearing.'

Constance wondered why he repeated her name so often; whether it was a habit he had, or whether he was nervous, or whether he thought it good manners. She was not so much impressed with him at first sight as she had expected to be. He had not said anything at all clever, though it was true that there had not been many opportunities for wit in the conversation that had taken place. He belonged to a type with which she was not familiar, and she could not help asking herself whether George had other friends like him, who, if she knew them, would call her by her name half-a-dozen times in three minutes, and if he had many of them whether, in the event of her marrying him, she would be expected to know them all and to like them all for his sake. Not that there was anything common or vulgar about this Johnson whom George praised so much. He spoke quietly, without any especial accent, and quite without affectation. He was dressed with perfect simplicity and good taste, there was nothing awkward in his manner—indeed, Constance vaguely wished that he might have shown some little awkwardness or shyness. He was evidently a man of the highest education, and George said he was a man of the highest intelligence, but as Constance gave him her hand and he closed the door of the brougham, the impression came over her with startling vividness that Mr. Johnson was emphatically not a man she would ask to dinner. She felt sure that if she met him in society she should feel a vague surprise at his being there, though she might find it impossible to say why he should not. On the other hand, though she was aware that she put herself in his power to some extent, since it was impossible that he should not guess that her interest in George Wood was the result of

something at least a little stronger than ordinary friendship, yet she very much preferred to trust this stranger rather than to confide in any of the men she knew in society, not excepting John Bond himself.

At five o'clock on the day agreed upon, Constance was informed that 'a gentleman, a Mr. Johnson,' had called, saying that he came by appointment.

'You are so kind,' said Constance, as he sat down opposite to her. He held the manuscript in his hand. 'And what do you think of it? Am I not right?'

'I am very much surprised,' said the pale young man. 'It is a remarkable book, Miss Fearing, and it ought to be published at once.'

Constance had felt sure of the answer, but she blushed with pleasure, a fact which did not escape Johnson's quiet scrutiny.

'You really think Mr. Wood has talent?' she asked, for the sake of hearing another word of praise.

'There is more talent in one of its pages than in the whole aggregate works of half-a-dozen ordinarily successful writers,' Johnson answered with emphasis.

'I am so glad you think so—so glad. And what is the first thing to be done in order to get this published? You see, I must ask your help, now that you have given your opinion.'

'Will you leave the matter in my hands, Miss Fearing?'

Constance hesitated. There was assuredly no one who would be more likely to do the proper thing in the matter, and yet she reflected that she knew nothing or next to nothing of the man before her, except from George's praise of his intelligence.

'Suppose that a publisher accepts the book,' she said warily, 'what will he give Mr. Wood for it?'

'Ten per cent. on the advertised retail price,' Johnson answered promptly.

'Of every copy sold, I suppose,' said Constance, who had a remarkably good head for business. 'That is not much, is it? And besides, how is one to know that the publisher is honest? One hears such dreadful stories about those people.'

Johnson laughed a little.

'Faith is the evidence of things unseen, supported by reasonable and punctual payments,' he said. 'Publishers are not all Cretans, Miss Fearing. There be certain just men among them who have reputations to lose.'

'And none of them would do better than that by the book?'

But of course you know. Have you ever published anything yourself? Forgive my ignorance.'

'I once published a volume of critical essays,' Johnson answered.

'What was the title? I must read it—please tell me.'

'It is not worth the trouble, I assure you. The title was—*Critical Essays*, by William Johnson.'

'Thank you; I will remember. And will you really do your very best for Mr. Wood's book? Do you think it could be published in a fortnight?'

'A fortnight!' exclaimed Johnson, aghast at Constance's ignorance. 'Three months would be the shortest time possible.'

'Three months! Dear me, what a length of time!'

Johnson rapidly explained as well as he could the principal reasons why it sometimes takes longer to publish a book than to write one. He exchanged a few more words with Constance, promising to make every effort to push on the appearance of the novel, but advising her to expect no news whatever for several months. Then he took his leave.

Half an hour later Constance was at her bookseller's.

'I want a book called *Critical Essays*, by William Johnson,' she said. 'Have you got it, Mr. Popples?'

She waited some time before it was brought to her. Then she pretended to look through it carefully, examining the headings of the papers that were collected in it.

'Is it worth reading?' she asked carelessly.

'Excellent, Miss Fearing,' answered the gray-haired professional bookseller. He had known Constance since she had been a mere child with a passion for Mr. Walter Crane's picture-books. 'Excellent,' he repeated emphatically. 'A little dry, perhaps, but truly excellent.'

'Has it been a success, do you know?'

'Yes, I know, Miss Fearing,' answered Mr. Popples, with a meaning smile. 'I know very well. I happen to know that it did not pay for the printing.'

'Did the author not even get ten per cent. on the advertised retail price?' Constance inquired.

Mr. Popples stared at her for a moment, evidently wondering where she had picked up the phrase. He immediately suspected her of having perpetrated a literary misdeed in one volume.

'No, Miss Fearing. I happen to know that Mr. Johnson did not get ten per cent. on the advertised retail price of his book;

in point of fact, he got nothing at all for it, excepting a number of very flattering notices. But, excuse me, Miss Fearing, if you were thinking of venturing upon publishing anything——' His voice dropped to a confidential pitch.

'I?' exclaimed Constance.

'Well, Miss Fearing, it could be done very discreetly, you know. Just a little volume of sweet verse? Is that it, Miss Fearing? Now, you know, that kind of thing would have a run in society, and if you would like to put it into my hands, I know a publisher——'

'But, Mr. Popples,' interrupted Constance, recovering from her amusement so far as to be able to interrupt the current of the bookseller's engaging offers, 'I never wrote anything in my life. I asked out of sheer curiosity.'

Mr. Popples smiled blandly, without the least appearance of disappointment.

'Well, well, Miss Fearing, you are quite right,' he said. 'In point of fact, those little literary ventures of young ladies very rarely do come to much, do they? To misquote the Laureate, Miss Fearing, we might say that "Men must write and women must read!" Eh, Miss Fearing?'

The old fellow chuckled at his bad joke, as he wrapped up the volume of *Critical Essays* by William Johnson, and handed it across the table. There were only tables in Mr. Popples's establishment; he despised counters.

'Anything else to serve you, Miss Fearing? A novel or two, for the May weather? No? Let me take it to your carriage.'

'Thanks. I am walking, but I will carry it. Good evening.'

'Good evening, Miss Fearing. Your parasol is here. Walking this evening? In the May weather? Good evening, Miss Fearing.'

And Mr. Popples bowed his favourite customer out of his establishment, with a very kindly look in his tired old spectacled eyes.

Constance had got what she had come for. If William Johnson, author of *Critical Essays*, a journalist and a man presumably acquainted with all the ins and outs of publishing, had made nothing by his successful book, George would be doing very well in obtaining ten per cent. on the advertised retail price of every copy of his novel which was sold. Constance had been mistaken when she had doubted Johnson, but she did not regret her doubt in the least. After all, she had undertaken the responsi-

bility of George's book, and she could not conscientiously believe everything she was told by strangers concerning its chances. Mr. Popples, however, was above suspicion, and had, moreover, no reason for telling that the *Critical Essays* had brought their author no remuneration. Johnson's face, too, inspired confidence, as well as George's own trust in him. Constance felt that she had done all she could, and she accordingly made her preparations for going out of town.

She was glad to get away, in order to study herself. The habit of introspection had grown upon her, for she had encouraged herself in it ever since she had begun to feel that George was something more to her than a friend. Her over-conscientious nature feared to make some mistake which might embitter his life as well as her own. She was in constant dread of letting herself be carried away by the impulse of a moment to say something that might bind her to marry him, before she could feel that she loved him wholly as she wished to love him. On looking back, she bitterly regretted having allowed him to kiss her cheek on that morning in the Park. She had been under the influence of a strong emotion, produced by the conclusion of his book, and she seemed in her own eyes to have acted in a way quite unworthy of herself. Had she been able to carry her analysis further, she would have discovered that behind her distrust of herself she felt a lingering distrust of George. A year earlier she had thought it possible that he was strongly attracted by her fortune. Now, however, she would have scouted the idea if it had presented itself in that shape. But it was present, nevertheless, in a more subtle form.

'He loves me sincerely,' she said to herself. 'He would marry me now if I were a pauper. But would he have loved me from the first if I had been poor?'

It was not often that she put the question, even in this way, but as it belonged to that class of vicious inquiries which it is impossible to answer, it tormented her perpetually by suggesting a whole series of doubts, useless in themselves and mischievous in their consequences. She was convinced of two things. First, that she was unaccountably influenced by George's presence to say and do things which she was determined at other times that she would never say or do; and, secondly, that, whether she loved him truly or not, she could not imagine herself as loving any one else nearly so much. Under these circumstances, it was clearly better that she should not see him for a considerable time. She would

thus withdraw herself from the sphere of his direct influence, and she would have leisure to study and weigh her own feelings, with a view to reaching a final decision. Nevertheless, she looked forward to the moment of parting from him with something that was very like pain. Contrary to her expectations, the interview passed off with little show of emotion on either side.

They talked for some time about the book, Constance assuming an air of mystery regarding its future, and George speaking of it with the utmost indifference. At the last minute, when he had risen to go and was standing beside her, she laid her hand upon his arm.

‘You do not think I am heartless, do you?’ she asked, looking at a particular button on his coat.

‘No,’ George answered. ‘I think you are very sincere. I sometimes wish you would forget to be so sincere with yourself. I wish you would let yourself run away with yourself now and then.’

‘That would be very wrong. It would be very unfair and unjust to you. Suppose—only suppose, you know—that I made up my mind to marry you, and then discovered when it was too late that I did not love you. Would not that be dreadful? Is it not better to wait a little longer?’

‘You shall never say that I have pressed you into a decision against your will,’ said George, betraying in one speech, his youth, his ignorance of woman in general, and his almost Quixotic readiness to obey Constance in anything and everything.

‘You are very generous,’ she answered, still looking at the button. ‘But I will not feel that I am spoiling your life—no, let me speak—to keep you in this position much longer would be doing that, indeed it would. In six months from now you will be famous. I know it, though you laugh at me. Then you will be able to marry whom you please. I cannot marry you now, for I do not love you enough. You are free, you must not feel that I want to bind you, do you understand? You will travel this summer, for you have told me that you are going to make several visits in country houses. If you see any one you like better than me, do not feel that you are tied by any promise. It would not break my heart if you married some one else.’

In spite of her calmness, there was a slight tremor in her voice which did not escape George’s ear.

‘I shall never love any one else,’ he said simply.

‘You may. I may. But waiting must have a limit——’

'Say this, Constance,' said George. 'Say that if, by next May, you do not love me less than you do now, you will be my wife.'

'No. I must love you more. If I love you better than now, it will show that my love is always to increase, and I will marry you.'

'In May?'

'In May, next year. But this is no engagement. I make no promise, and I will take none from you. You are free, and so am I, until the first of May——'

'I shall never be free again, dear,' said George happily, for he anticipated great things of the strange agreement she proposed. He put his arm about her and drew her to him very tenderly. Another second and his lips would have touched her cheek, just where they had touched it once before. But Constance drew back quickly and slipped from his arm.

'No, no,' she laughed, 'that is not a part of the agreement. It is far too binding.'

George's face was grave and sad. Her action had given him a sharp thrust of painful disappointment, and he did his best not to hide it. Constance looked at him a moment.

'Am I not right?' she asked.

'You are always right—even when you give me pain,' he answered with a shade of bitterness.

'Have I given you pain now?'

'Yes.'

'Did you think, from the way I behaved, that I would let you kiss me for good-bye?'

'Yes.'

'You shall not say that I hurt you, and you shall not go away believing that I deceived you,' said Constance, coming back to him.

She put her two hands round his neck and drew down his willing face. Then she kissed him softly on both cheeks.

'Forgive me,' she said. 'I did not mean to hurt you. Good-bye—dear.'

George left the house feeling very happy, but persuaded that neither he nor any other man could ever understand the heart of woman, which, after all, seemed to be the only thing in the world worth understanding. He had ample time for reflection in the course of the summer, but without the reality before him the study of the problem grew more and more perplexing.

The weather grew very warm in the end of June, and George left New York. He had written much in the course of the year and had earned enough money to give himself a rest during the hot months. He tried to persuade his father to accompany him and to spend the time by the seaside while George himself made his promised visits. But Jonah Wood declared that he preferred New York in the summer, and that nothing would induce him to waste money on such folly as travelling. To tell the truth, the old gentleman had grown accustomed to rigid economy in his little house in town, but he could not look forward with any pleasure to the discomforts of second-rate hotels in second-rate places. So George went away alone.

He had already begun another book. He did not look upon his first effort in the light of a book at all, but he had tasted blood, and the thirst was upon him, and he must needs quench it. This time, however, he set himself steadily to work to do the very best he could, labouring to repress his own vivacity and trying to keep out of the fever that was threatening to carry him away outside of himself. He limited his work strictly to a small amount every day, polishing every sentence and thinking out every phrase before it was set down. Working in this way, he had written about half a volume by the end of August, when he found himself in a pleasant country-house by the sea in the midst of a large party of people. He had all but forgotten his first book, and had certainly but a very dim recollection of what it contained. He looked back upon its feverish production as upon a sort of delirious dream during which he had raved in a language now strange to his memory.

One afternoon, in the midst of a game of lawn-tennis, a telegram was brought to him :—

‘Rob Roy and Co. publish book immediately England and America. Have undertaken that you accept royalty ten per cent. retail advertised price. Wire reply. C. F.’

George possessed a very considerable power of concealing his emotions, but this news was almost too much for his equanimity. He thrust the despatch into his pocket and went on playing, but he lost the game in a shameful fashion and was roundly abused by his cousin, Mamie Trimm, who chanced to be his partner. Mamie and her mother were stopping in the same house, by what Mrs. Sherrington Trimm considered a rather unfortunate accident, since Mamie was far too fond of George already. In reality, the excellent hostess had an idea that George loved the girl, and as the

match seemed most appropriate in her eyes, she had brought them together on purpose.

As soon as possible he slipped away, put on his flannel jacket and went to the telegraph-office, reading the despatch he had received over and over again as he hurried along the path, and trying to compose his answer at the same time. Constance's message seemed amazingly neat, businesslike and concise, and he wondered whether some one else had not been concerned in the affair. The phrase about the royalty did not sound like a woman's expression, though she might have copied it from the publisher's letter.

George had formerly imagined that if his first performance were really in danger of being published, he should do everything in his power to prevent such a catastrophe. He felt no such impulse now, however. Messrs. Rob Roy & Company were very serious people, great publishers, whose name alone gave a book a chance of success. They bore an exceptional reputation in the world of books, and George knew very well that they would not publish trash. But he was not elated by the news, however much surprised he might be. It was strange, indeed, that a firm of such good judgment should have accepted his novel, but it could not be but a failure, all the same. He would get the proofs as soon as possible, and he would do what he could to make the work decently presentable by inserting plentiful improvements.

His answer to Constance's telegram was short :—

‘Deplore catastrophe. Pity public. Thank publisher. Agree terms. Where are proofs?’
G. W.’

By the time the proofs were ready, George was once more in New York, though Constance had not yet returned. He was hard at work upon his second book, and looked with some disgust at the package of printed matter that lay folded as it had come, upon his table. Nevertheless he opened the bundle and looked at them.

‘Confound them!’ he exclaimed. ‘They have sent me a paged proof instead of galleys!’

It was evident that he could not insert many changes, where the matter was already arranged in book form, and he anticipated endless annoyance in pasting in extensive ‘riders’ of writing-paper in order to get room for the vast changes he considered necessary.

An hour later he was lying back in his easy-chair reading

his own novel with breathless interest. He had not yet made a correction of any kind in the text. It was not until the following day that he was able to go over it all more calmly, but even then he found that little could be done to improve it. When he had finished, he sent the proofs back and wrote a letter to Constance.

'I have read the book over,' he wrote, among other things, 'and it is not so bad as I supposed. I know that it cannot be good, but I am convinced that worse novels have found their way into print, if not into notice. I take back at least one-tenth of all I said about it formerly, and I will not abuse it in the future, leaving that office to those who will doubtless command much forcible language in support of their just opinion. Am I to thank you, too? I hardly know. There are other things for which I would rather be in a position to owe you thanks. However, the die is cast, you have made a skipping-rope of the Rubicon and have whisked it under my feet without my consent. Let the poor book take its chance. Its birth was happy, may its death at least be peaceful.'

To this Constance replied three weeks later :—

'I am glad to see that a disposition to repentance has set in. You are wise in not abusing my book any more. You ought to be doing penance in sackcloth and ashes before that bench in Central Park on which I sat when I told you it was good. The children would all laugh at you, and throw stones at you, and I should be delighted. I am not coming to town until it is published and is a success. Grace thinks I have gone into speculations, because I get so many letters and telegrams about it. I shall not tell you what the people who read the manuscript said about it. You can find that out for yourself.'

George awoke one morning to find himself, if not famous, at least the topic of the day in more countries than one. A week had not elapsed before the papers were full of notices of his book and speculations as to his personality. No one seemed to consider that George Winton Wood, the novelist, could be the same man as G. W. Wood, the signer of modest articles in the magazines. The first review called him an unknown person of surprising talent, the second did not hesitate to describe him as a man of genius, and the third—branded him as a plagiarist who had stolen his plot from a forgotten novel of the beginning of the century and had somehow—this was not clear in the article—made capital out of the writings of Macrobius ; he was a villain, a poacher, a pickpocket

novelist, a literary body-snatcher; in fact, in the eyes of all but the over-lax law, little short of a thief. George knew that sort of style, and he read the abuse over again and again with unmitigated delight. He had done as much himself in the good old days when the editors would let him. He did not show this particular notice to his father, however, and only handed him those that were favourable—and they were many. Jonah Wood sat reading them all day long, over and over again.

‘I am very glad, George,’ he said repeatedly. ‘I am very proud of you. It is splendid. But do you think all this will bring you much pecuniary remuneration?’

‘Ten per cent. on the advertised retail price of each copy,’ was George’s answer.

He entered the railway station one day and was amazed to see the walls of the place covered with huge placards, three feet square, bearing the name of his book and his own, alternately, in huge black letters on a white ground. The young man at the bookstall was doing a thriving business. George went up to him.

‘That book seems to sell,’ he said quietly.

‘Like hot cakes,’ answered the vendor, offering him his own production. ‘One dollar twenty-five cents.’

‘Thank you,’ said George. ‘I would not give so much for a novel.’

‘Well, there are others will, I guess,’ answered the young man. ‘Step aside, if you please, and give these ladies a chance.’

George smiled and turned away.

CHAPTER XI.

SHERINGTON TRIMM had kept Mr. Craik’s secret as well as he could, but although he had not told his wife anything positive concerning the will that had been so hastily drawn up, he had found it impossible not to convey to Totty such information about the matter as was manifestly negative. She had seen very soon that he considered the inheritance of her brother’s money as an illusion, upon which he placed no faith whatever, and she had understood that in advising her not to think too much about it, he meant to do more than administer one of his customary rebukes to her covetousness. At last, she determined to know the truth, and pressed him with the direct question.

‘So far as I know, my dear,’ he answered gravely, ‘you will

never get that money, so you may just as well put the subject out of your mind, and be satisfied with what you have.'

Neither diplomacy nor cajolery nor reproaches could force anything more definite than this from Sherrington Trimm's discreet lips, though Totty used all her weapons, and used them very cleverly, in her untiring efforts to find out the truth. Was Tom going to leave his gold to a gigantic charity? Sherry's round pink face grew suddenly stony. Was it a hospital or an asylum for idiots?—he really might tell her! His expression never changed. Totty was in despair, and her curiosity tormented her in a way that would have done credit to the gad-fly which tortured Io of old. Neither by word, nor look, nor deed could Sherry be made to betray his brother-in-law's secret. He was utterly impenetrable, as soon as the subject was brought up, and Totty even fancied that he knew beforehand when she was about to set some carefully-devised trap for him, so ready was he to oppose her wiles.

On the other hand, since old Mr. Craik had recovered, his sister had shown herself more than usually anxious to please him. In this she argued as her husband had done, saying that a man who had changed his will once might very possibly change it again. She therefore spared no pains in consulting Tom's pleasure whenever occasion offered, and she employed her best tact in making his life agreeable to him. He, on his part, was even more diverted than she intended that he should be, and he watched all her moves with inward amusement. There had never been any real sympathy between them. He had been the first child, and several others had died in infancy during a long series of years, Totty, the youngest of all, alone surviving, separated from her brother in age by nearly twenty years. From her childhood she had always been trying to get something from him, and whenever the matters in hand did not chance to clash with his own interests he had granted her request. Indeed, on the whole, and considering the man's grasping character, he had treated her with great generosity. Totty's gratitude, however, though always sincere, was systematically prophetic in regard to favours to come, and Tom had often wondered whether anything in the world would satisfy her.

Of late she seemed to have developed an intense interest in the means of prolonging life, and she did not fail to give him the benefit of all the newest theories on the subject. Tom, however, did not feel that he was going to die, and was more and more irritated by her officious suggestions. One day she took upon

herself to be more than usually pressing. He had been suffering from a slight cold, and she had passed an anxious week.

'There is nothing for you, Tom,' she said, 'but a milk cure and massage. They say there is nothing like it. It is perfectly wonderful——'

Her brother raised his bent head and looked keenly at her, while a sour smile passed over his face.

'Look here, Totty,' he answered, 'don't you think I should keep better in camphor?'

'How can you be so unkind!' exclaimed Totty, blushing scarlet. She rarely blushed at all, and her brother's amusement increased, until it reached its climax and broke out in a hard, rattling laugh.

After this Mrs. Trimm grew more cautious. She talked less of remedies and cures and practised with great care a mournfully sympathetic expression. In the course of a week or two this plan also began to wear upon Craik's nerves, for she made a point of seeing him almost every day.

'I say, Totty,' he said suddenly. 'If anybody is dead, tell me. If you think anybody is going to die, send for the doctor. But if they are all alive and well, don't go round looking like an undertaker's wife when the season has been too healthy.'

'How can you expect me to look gay?' Totty asked with a sad smile. 'Do you think it makes me happy to see you going on in this way?'

'Which way?' inquired Mr. Craik with a pleased grin.

'Why, you won't have massage, and you won't take the milk cure, and you won't go to Aix, and you won't let me do anything for you, and—and I'm so unhappy! Oh Tom, how unkind you are!'

Thereupon Mrs. Trimm burst into tears with much feeling. Tom Craik looked at her for some seconds, and then, being in his own house, rang the bell, sent for the housekeeper and a bottle of salts, and left Totty to recover as best she might. He knew very well that those same tears were genuine, and that they had their source in anger and disappointment rather than in any sympathy for himself, and he congratulated himself upon having changed his will in time.

The old man watched George Wood's increasing success with an interest that would have surprised the latter if he had known anything of it. It seemed as if, by assuring him the reversion of the fortune, Tom Craik had given him a push in the right direc-

tion. Since that time, indeed, George's luck had begun to turn, and now, though still unconscious of the wealth that awaited him, he was already far on the road to celebrity and independence. The lonely old man of business found a new and keen excitement in following the doings of the young fellow for whom he had secretly prepared such an overwhelming surprise. He was curious to see whether George would lose his head, whether he would turn into the fatuous idol of afternoon tea-parties, or whether he would fall into vulgar dissipation, whether he would quarrel with his father as soon as he was independent, or whether he would spend his earnings in making the old gentleman more comfortable.

Tom Craik cared very little what George did, provided he did something. What he most regretted was that he could not possibly be present to enjoy the surprise he had planned. It amused him to think out the details of his future. If, for instance, George took to drinking and gambling, losing and wasting at night what he had laboured hard to earn during the day, what a moment that would be in his life when he should be told that Tom Craik was dead, and that he was master of a great fortune! The old man chuckled over the idea, and fancied he could see George's face when, having lost more than he could possibly pay, his young eyes heavy with wine, his hand trembling with excitement, he would be making his last desperate stand at poker in the quiet upper room of a gambling club. He would lose his nerve, show his cards, lose and sink back in his chair with a stare of horror. At that moment the door would open, and Sherry Trimm would come in and whisper a few words in his ear. Tom Craik liked to imagine the young fellow's bound of surprise, the stifled cry of amazement that would escape from his lips, the doubts, the fears that would beset him until the money was his, and then the sudden cure that would follow. Yes, thought Tom, there was no such cure for a spendthrift as a fortune, a real fortune. To make a man love money, give it to him all at once in vast quantities—provided he is not a fool. And George was no fool. He had already proved that.

There was something satanic in Mr. Craik's speculations. He knew the world well. It amused him to fancy George admired and courted as a literary lion, but feared by all judicious mammas, as only young, poor and famous literary lions are feared. How the sentimental young ladies would crowd about him and offer him tea, cake, and plots for his novels! And how the ring of mothers would draw their daughters away from him and freeze

him with airs politely cold ! How two or three would be gathered together in one corner of the room to say to each other that two or three others in the opposite corner were foolishly exposing their daughters to the charms of an adventurer, for his books bring him in nothing, my dear, not a cent—Mr. Popples told me so ! And how the compliment would be returned upon the two or three, by the other two or three, with usurious compound interest ! Enter to them, thought Craik, another of their tribe—what do you think, my dears ? Tom Craik left all that money to George Wood, house, furniture, pictures, horses and carriages—everything ! Just think ! I really must go and speak to the dear fellow ! And how they would all be impelled, at the same moment, by the same charitable thought ! How they would all glide forward, during the next quarter of an hour, impatient to thaw with intimacy what they had lately wished to freeze with politeness, and how, a little later, each would say to her lovely daughter as they went home—‘ You know Georgey Wood ’—for it would be Georgey at once—‘ is such a good fellow, so famous and yet so modest, so unassuming when you think how enormously rich he is.’ ‘ Is he rich, mamma ? ’ ‘ Why, yes, Kitty—or Totty, or Dottie, or Hattie, or Nelly—he has all Tom Craik’s money, and that gem of a house to live in, and the pictures and everything, and your cousin—or your aunt—Totty is furious about it—but he is such a nice fellow.’ There would not be much difficulty about getting a wife for the ‘ nice fellow ’ then, thought Thomas Craik.

And one or other of these things might have actually happened, precisely as Thomas Craik foresaw, if that excellent and worthy man, Sherrington Trimm, had not unexpectedly fallen ill during the spring that followed George Wood’s first success. His illness was severe and was undoubtedly caused by too much hard work, and was superinduced by a moderate but unchanging taste for canvas-backs, truffles boiled in madeira, and an especial brand of brut champagne. Sherry recovered, indeed, but was ordered to Carlsbad in Bohemia without delay. Totty found that it was quite impossible for her to accompany him, considering the precarious state of her brother’s health. To leave Tom at such a time would be absolutely heartless. Sherrington Trimm expressed a belief that Tom would last through the summer and perhaps through several summers, as he never did a stroke of work and was as wiry as hairpins. He might have added that his brother-in-law did not subsist upon cryptogams and brut wines, but Sherry resolutely avoided suggesting to himself that the daily consump-

tion of those delicacies was in any way connected with his late illness. His wife, however, shook her head, and, quoting glibly three or four medical authorities, assured him that Tom's state was very far from satisfactory. Mamie might go with her father, if she pleased, but Totty would not leave the sinking ship.

'Till the rats leave it,' added Mr. Trimm viciously. His wife gave him a mournfully severe glance and left him to make his preparations.

So he went abroad, and was busy for some time with the improvement of his liver and the reduction of his superfluous fat, and John Bond managed the business in his stead. John Bond was a very fine fellow and did well whatever he undertook, so that Mr. Trimm felt no anxiety about their joint affairs. John himself was delighted to have an opportunity of showing what he could do, and he looked forward to marrying Grace Fearing in the summer, considering that his position was now sufficiently assured. He was far too sensible a man to have any scruples about taking a rich wife while he himself was poor, but he was too independent to live upon Grace's fortune, and as she was so young he had put off the wedding until he felt that he was making enough money to have all that he wanted for himself without her aid. When they were married she could do what she pleased without consulting him, and he would do as he liked without asking her advice or assistance. He considered that marriage could not be happy where either of the couple was dependent upon the other for necessities or luxuries, and that domestic peace depended largely on the exclusion of all monetary transactions between man and wife. John Bond was a typical man of his class, tall, fair, good-looking, healthy, active, energetic and keen. He had never had a day's illness nor an hour's serious annoyance. He had begun life in the right way, at the right end, and in a cheerful spirit. There was no morbid sentimentality about him, no unnecessary development of the imagination, no nervousness, no shyness, no underrating of other people and no overrating of himself. He knew he could never be great or famous, and that he could only be John Bond as long as he lived. John Bond he would be, then, and nothing else, but John Bond should come to mean a great deal more before he had done with the name. It should mean the keenest, most hardworking, most honest, most reliable, most clean-handed lawyer in the city of New York. There was a breezy atmosphere of truth, soap, and enterprise about John Bond.

Before going abroad Sherrington Trimm asked Tom Craik whether he should tell his junior partner of the existence of a will in favour of George Wood. Mr. Craik hesitated before he answered.

'Well, Sherry,' he said at last, 'considering the uncertainty of human life, as Totty says, and considering that you are more used to Extra Dry than to Carlsbad waters, you had better tell him. There is no knowing what tricks that stuff may play with you. Let it be in confidence.'

'Of course,' said Mr. Trimm. 'I would rather trust John Bond than trust myself.'

The same day he imparted the secret to his partner. The latter nodded gravely and then fell into a fit of abstraction which was very rare with him. He knew a great deal of the relations existing between Constance and George Wood, and in his frank, lawyer-like distrust of people's motives he had shared Grace's convictions about the man, though he had always treated him with indifference and always avoided speaking of him.

There are some people whose curiosity finds relief in asking questions, even though they obtain no answers to their inquiries. Totty was one of these, and she missed her husband more than she had thought possible. There had been a sort of satisfaction in tormenting him about the will, accompanied by a constant hope that he might one day forget his discretion in a fit of anger and let out the secret she so much desired to learn. Now, however, there was no one to cross-examine except Tom himself, and she would as soon have thought of asking him a direct question in the matter as of trying to make holes in a mill-stone with a darning-needle. Her curiosity had therefore no outlet, and as her interest was so directly concerned at the same time, it is no wonder that she fell into a deplorably unsettled state of mind. For a long time not a ray of light illuminated the situation, and Totty actually began to grow thin under the pressure of her constant anxiety. At last she hit upon a plan for discovering the truth, so simple that she wondered how she had failed to think of it before.

Nothing, indeed, could be more easy of execution than what she contemplated. Her husband kept in a desk in his room a set of duplicate keys to the deed-boxes in his office. Among these there must be also the one that opened her brother's box. These iron cases were kept in a strong-room that opened into a small corridor between Sherrington Trimm's private study and the outer rooms where the clerks worked. Totty had her own box there,

separate from her husband's, and she remembered that there was one not far from hers on which was painted her brother's name. She would have no difficulty in entering the strong-room alone, on pretence of depositing a deed. Was she not the wife of the senior partner, and had she not often done the same thing before? If her brother had made a new will, it must be in that box, where he kept such papers as possessed only a legal value. One glance would show her all she wanted to know, and her mind would be at rest from the wearing anxiety that now made her life almost unbearable.

She opened the desk and had no difficulty in finding the key to her brother's box. It was necessary to take something in the nature of a deed, to hold in her hand as an excuse for entering the strong-room, for she did not want to take anything out of it, lest John Bond, who would see her, should chance to notice the fact and should mention it to her husband when he came back. On the other hand, it would not do to deposit an empty envelope, sealed and marked as though it contained something valuable. Mrs. Trimm never did things by halves, nor was she ever so unwise as to leave traces of her tactics behind her. A palpable fraud like an empty envelope might at some future time be used against her. To take any document away from the office, even if she returned it the next day, would be to expose herself to a cross-examination from Sherrington when he came home, for he knew the state of her affairs and would know also that she never needed to consult the papers she kept at the office. There was nothing for it but to have a real document of some sort. Totty sat down and thought the matter over for a quarter of an hour. Then she ordered her carriage and drove down town to the office of a broker who sometimes did business for her and her husband.

'I have made a bet,' she said, with a little laugh, 'and I want you to help me to win it.'

The broker expressed his readiness to put the whole New York Stock Exchange at her disposal in five minutes, if that were of any use to her.

'Yes,' said Totty. 'I have a bet that I will buy a share in something—say for a hundred dollars—that I will keep it a year, and that at the end of that time it will be worth more than I gave for it.'

'One way of winning the bet would be to buy several shares in different things and declare the winner afterwards. One of the lot will go up.'

'That would not be fair,' said Totty with a laugh. 'I must say what it is I have bought. Can you give me something of the kind—now? I want to take it away with me, to show it.'

The broker went out and returned a few minutes later with what she wanted—a certificate of stock to the amount of one hundred dollars in a well-known undertaking.

'If anything has a chance, this has,' said the broker, putting it into an envelope and handing it to her. 'Oh no, Mrs. Trimm, never mind paying for it!' he added with a careless laugh. 'Give it back to me when you have done with it.'

But Totty preferred to pay her money, and did so before she departed. Ten minutes later she was at her husband's office. Her heart beat a little faster as she asked John Bond to open the strong-room for her. She hoped that something would happen to occupy him while she was within.

'Let me help you,' he said, entering the place with her.

The strong-room was lighted from above by a small skylight over a heavy grating, the boxes being arranged on shelves around the walls. John Bond went straight to the one that belonged to Totty and moved it forward a little so that she could open it. She held her envelope ostentatiously in one hand and felt for her key in her pocket with her other. She knew which was hers and which was her brother's, because Tom's had a label fastened to it with his name, whereas her own had none.

'Thanks,' she said, as she turned the key in the lock and raised the lid. 'Please do not stay here, Mr. Bond. I want to look over a lot of things so as to put this I have brought into the right place.'

'Well—if I cannot be of any use,' said John. 'I have rather a busy day. Please call me to shut the room when you have finished.'

Totty breathed more freely when she was alone. She could hear John cross the corridor and enter the private office. A moment later everything was quiet. With a quick, stealthy movement she slipped the other key into the box labelled 'T. Craik,' turned it and lifted the cover. Her heart was beating violently.

Fortunately for her the will was the last paper that had been put with the others, and lay on the top of them all. The heavy blue envelope was sealed and marked 'Will' with the date. Totty turned pale as she held it in her hands. She had not the slightest intention of destroying it, whatever it might contain, but even to break the seal and read it looked very like a criminal act. On the other hand, when she realised that she held in her

hand the answer to all her questions, and that by a turn of the fingers she could satisfy all her boundless curiosity, she knew that it was of no use to attempt resistance in the face of such a temptation. She realised, indeed, that she would not be able to restore the seal, and that she must not hope to hide the fact that somebody had tampered with the will, but the thought could not deter her from carrying out her intention. As she turned, her sleeve caught on the corner of the box, which she had inadvertently left open, and the lid fell with a sharp snap. Instantly John Bond's footstep was heard in the corridor.

Totty had barely time to withdraw the key from her brother's box and to bury the will under her own papers when John entered the room.

'Oh!' he exclaimed in evident surprise, 'I thought I heard you shut your box, and that you had finished.'

'No,' said Totty in an unsteady voice, bending her pale face over her documents. 'The lid fell, but I opened it again. I will call you when I come out.'

John returned to his work without any suspicion of what had happened. Then Totty extracted a hairpin from the coils of her brown hair and tried to lift the seal of the will from the paper to which it was so firmly attached. But she only succeeded in damaging it. There was nothing to be done but to tear the envelope. Still using her hairpin, she slit open one end of the cover and drew out the document.

When she knew the contents, her face expressed unbounded surprise. It had never entered her head that Tom could leave his money to George Wood, of all people in the world.

'What a fool I have been!' she exclaimed under her breath.

Then she began to reflect upon the consequences of what she had done, and, her curiosity being satisfied, her fears began to assume serious proportions. Was it a criminal act that she had committed? She gazed rather helplessly at the torn envelope. It would be impossible to restore it. It would be equally impossible to put the will back into the box, loose and unsealed, without her husband's noticing the fact the next time he had occasion to look into Tom Craik's papers. He would remember very well that he had sealed it and marked it on the outside. The envelope, at least, must disappear at once. She crumpled it into as small a compass as possible and put it into her pocket. It would be very simple to burn it as soon as she was at home. But how to dispose of the will itself was a much harder matter. She dared not destroy that also, for that might turn out to be a deliberate theft,

or fraud, or whatever the law called such deeds. On the other hand, her brother might ask for it at any time, and if it were not in the box it could not be forthcoming, and her husband would get into trouble. It would be easy for Tom to suspect that Sherrington Trimm had destroyed the will, in order that his wife, as next of kin and only heir-at-law, should get the fortune. She thought that, as it was, Tom had shown an extraordinary belief in human nature, though, when she thought of her husband's known honesty, she understood that nobody could mistrust him. He himself would doubtless be the first to discover his loss. What would he do? He would go to Tom and make him execute a duplicate of the will that was lost. Meanwhile, and in case Tom died before Sherrington came back, Totty could put the original in some safe place, where she could cause it to be found if necessary—behind one of those boxes, for instance, or in some corner of the strong-room. Nothing that was locked up between those four walls could ever be lost. If Tom died, she would of course be told that a will had been made and was missing. John Bond would come to her in great distress, and she would come down to the office and help in the search. The scheme did not look very diplomatic, but she was sure that there was nothing else to be done. It was the only way in which she could avoid committing a crime while avoiding also the necessity of confessing to her husband that she had committed an act of supreme folly.

She folded the paper together and looked about the small room for a place in which to hide it. As she was looking she thought she heard John Bond's step again. She had no time to lose, for she would not be able to get rid of him if he entered the strong-room a third time. To leave it on one of the shelves would be foolish, for it might be found at any time. She could see no chink or crack into which to drop it, and John was certainly coming. Totty in her desperation thrust the paper into the bosom of her dress, shut up her own box noisily and went out.

She thought that John Bond looked at her very curiously when she went away, though the impression might well be the result of her own guilty fears. As a matter of fact he was surprised by her extreme pallor, and was on the point of asking if she were ill. But he reflected that the strong-room was a chilly place and that she might be only feeling cold, and he held his tongue.

The paper seemed to burn her, and she longed to be in her own house where she could at least lock it up until she could come to some wise decision in regard to it. She leaned back in

her carriage in an agony of nervous fear. What if John Bond should chance to be the one who made the discovery? He probably knew of the existence of the will, and he very probably had seen it and knew where it was. It was strange that she had not thought of that. If, for instance, it happened that he needed to look at some of her brother's papers that very day, would he not notice the loss and suspect her? After all, he knew as well as any one what she had to gain by destroying the will, if he knew what it contained. How much better it would have been to put it back in its place even without the envelope! How much better anything would be than to feel that she might be found out by John Bond!

She was already far up town, but in her distress she did not recognise her whereabouts, and leaning forward slightly looked through the window. As fate would have it, the only person near the carriage in the street was George Wood, who had recognised it and was trying to get a glimpse of herself. When he saw her, he bowed and smiled, just as he always did. Totty nodded hastily and fell back into her seat. A feeling of sickening despair came over her, and she closed her eyes.

CHAPTER XII.

GEORGE WOOD's reputation spread rapidly. He had arrested the attention of the public, and the public was both ready and willing to be amused by him. He had finished the second of his books soon after the appearance of the first, and he had found no difficulty in selling the manuscript outright upon his own terms. It was published about the time when the events took place which have been described in the last chapter, and it obtained a wide success. It was, indeed, wholly different from its predecessor in character, and presented a strong contrast to it. The first had been full of action, passionate, strange, unlike the books of the day. The second was the result of much thought and lacked almost altogether the qualities that had given such phenomenal popularity to the first. It was a calm book, almost destitute of plot and of dramatic incidents. It had been polished and adorned to the best of the young writer's ability, he had put into it the most refined of his thoughts, he had filled it with the sayings of characters more than half ideal. He had believed in it while he

was writing it, but he was disappointed with it when it was finished. He had intended to bind together a nosegay of sweet-scented flowers about a central rose, and when he had finished, his nosegay seemed to him artificial, the blossoms looked to him as though they were without stems, tied to dry sticks, and the scent of them had no freshness for his nostrils. Nevertheless he knew that he had given to his work all that he possessed of beauty and refinement in the storehouse of his mind, and he looked upon the venture as final in deciding his future career. It is worse to meet with failure on the publication of a second book, when the first has taken the world by surprise, than it is to fail altogether at the very beginning. Many a polished scholar has produced one good volume; many a refined and spiritual intelligence has painted one lovely scene and dropped the brushes for ever, or taken them up only to blotch and blur incongruous colours upon a spiritless outline, searching with blind eyes for the light that shone but once and can never shine again. Many have shot one arrow in the air and have hit the central mark, whose fingers scarce knew how to hold the bow. The first trial is one of half-reasoned, half-inspired talent; the second shows the artist's hand; the third and all that follow are works done in the competition between master and master, to which neither apprentice nor idle lover of the art can be admitted. He whose first great effort has been successful, and whose second disappoints no one but himself, may safely feel that he has found out his element and knows his own strength. He will, perhaps, turn out only a dull master at his craft as years go on, or he may be but a second-rate artist, but his apprenticeship has been completed, and he will henceforth be judged by the same standard as other artists and masters.

George Wood had followed his own instinct in lavishing so much care and thought and pains upon the book that was now to appear, and his instinct had not deceived him, though when he saw the result he feared that he had made the great false step that is irretrievable. Though many were ready to accept his work on any terms he was pleased to name, yet he held back his manuscript for many weeks, hesitating to give it to the world. The memory of his first enthusiasms blended in his mind with the beauties of tales yet untold, and darkened in his eyes the polish of the present work. Constance admired it exceedingly, saying that, although nothing could ever be to her like the first, this was so different in every way, and yet so good, that no unpleasant

comparisons could be made between the two. Then George took it to Johnson, who kept it a long time and would give no opinion about it until he had read every word it contained.

‘This settles it,’ he said at last.

‘For better or for worse?’ George asked, looking at the pale young man’s earnest face.

‘For better,’ Johnson answered without hesitation. ‘You are a novelist. It is not so wide as a church-door, nor so deep as a well—but it will serve. You will never regret having published it.’

So the book went to the press and in due time appeared, was tasted, criticised, and declared to be good by a majority of judges, was taken up by the public, was discussed, liked, and obtained a large sale. George was congratulated by all his friends in terms of the greatest enthusiasm, and he received so many invitations to dinner as made him feel that either his digestion or his career, or both, must perish in the attempt to cope with them. The dinner-party of to-day, considered as the reward of merit and the expression of good feeling, is no novelty in the history of the world’s society. Little Benjamin was expected to eat twelve times as much as any of his big brothers because Joseph liked him, and the successful man of to-day is often treated with the same kindly though destructive liberality. No one would think it enough to ask him to tea and overwhelm him with the praises of a select circle of fashionable people. He must be made to eat in order that he may understand from the fulness of his own stomach the fulness of his admirer’s heart. To heap good things upon the plate of genius has been in all times considered the most practical way of expressing the public admiration—and in times not long past there was indeed a practical reason for such expression of goodwill, in that genius was liable to be very hungry even after it had been universally acknowledged. The world has more than once bowed down from a respectful distance to the possessor of a glorious intelligence, who in his heart would have preferred a solid portion of bread and cheese to the perishable garlands of flowers scattered at his feet, or to the less corruptible monuments of bronze and stone upon which his countrymen were ready to lavish their gold after he was dead of starvation.

A change has come over the world of late, and it may be that writers themselves have been the cause of it. It is certain that since those who live by the pen have made it their business to amuse rather than to admonish and instruct, their substance has

been singularly increased and their path has been made enviably smooth. Their shadows not only wax and follow the outlines of a pleasant rotundity, but they are cast upon marble pavements, inlaid floors, and Eastern carpets, instead of upon the dingy walls and greasy mud of Grub Street. The star of the public amuser is in the ascendant, and his 'Part of Fortune' is high in the mid-heaven.

It has been said that nothing succeeds like success, and George very soon began to find out the truth of the saying. He was ignorant of the strange possibilities of wealth that were in store for him, and the present was sufficient for all his desires, and far exceeded his former hopes. The days were gone by when he had looked upon his marriage with Constance Fearing as a delicious vision that could never be realised, and to contemplate which, even without hope, seemed to be a dangerous piece of presumption. He had now a future before him, brilliant, perhaps, but assuredly honourable and successful. At his age and with his health and strength, the possibility of his being broken down by overwork or illness did not present itself to him, and if it had he could very well have afforded to disregard it in making his calculations. The world's face showed him one glorious catalogue of hopes, and he felt that he was the man to realise them all.

And now, too, the first of May was approaching again, and he looked forward to receiving a final answer from Constance. Her manner had changed little towards him during the winter, but he thought that little had been for the better. He never doubted now that she was most sincerely attached to him, nor that it depended on anything but her own fancy to give a name to that attachment and call it love. Surely the trial had lasted long enough, surely she must know her own mind now, after so many months of waiting. It was two years since he had first told her that he loved her, a year had passed away since she had admitted that she loved him a little, and now the second year, the one she had asked for as a period of probation, had spent itself likewise, bringing with it for George the first great success of his life, and doubling, trebling his chances of happiness. His growing reputation was a bond between them, of which they had forged every link together. Her praise had stimulated his strength, her delicate and refined taste had often guided the choice of his thoughts, his power of language had found words for what was in the hearts of both. George could no more fancy himself as working without consulting Constance than he could imagine what life would be

without sight or hearing. Her charm was upon him, and penetrated all he did; her beauty was the light by which he saw other women, her voice the music that made harmony of all other sounds. He loved her now, as women have rarely been loved, for love had taken root in his noble and generous nature, as a rare seed in a virgin soul, beautiful from the first and gaining beauty as it grew in strength and fulness of proportion. His heart had never been disturbed before by anything resembling true passion, there were no reminiscences to choke the new growth, no dry and withered stems about which the new love must twine itself until its spreading leaves and clasping tendrils made a rich foliage to cover the dead tree. He, she, the world, love, reputation, were all young together, all young and fresh, and full of the power to grow. To think that the prospect of such happiness should be blighted, the hope of such perfect bliss disappointed was beyond the power of George's imagination.

The time was drawing near when he was to have his answer. He had often done violence to himself of late in abstaining from all question of her love. Earlier in the year he had once or twice returned to his old way of talking with her, but she had seemed displeased, and had put him off, answering that the first of May was time enough, and that she would tell him then. He had no means of knowing what was passing in her mind, for she was almost always the same Constance he had known so long—gentle, sympathising, ready with encouragement, enthusiastic concerning what he did well, suggestive when he was in doubt, thoughtful when his taste did not agree with hers. Looking back upon those long months of intimacy, George knew that she had never bound herself, never uttered a promise of any sort, never directly given him to understand that she would consent to be his wife. And yet her whole life seemed to him to have been one promise since he had known her, and it was treason, in his judgment, to suspect her of insincerity.

In the last days of April he saw less of her than usual, though he could scarcely tell why. More than once, when he had hoped to find her alone, there had been visitors with her, or her sister had been present, and he had not been able to exchange a word with her without being overheard. Indeed, when Grace was established in the room he generally made his visits as short as possible. There was something in the atmosphere of the house, too, that filled him with evil forebodings. Constance often seemed abstracted and preoccupied; there appeared to be a better understanding

between the sisters in regard to himself than formerly, and Grace's manner had changed. In the old days of their acquaintance she had taken little pains to conceal her dislike after she had once made up her mind that George loved her sister, her greeting had been almost haughty, her words had been few and generally ironical, her satisfaction at his departure needlessly apparent. During the last month she had relaxed the severity of her behaviour, instead of treating him more harshly as he had expected and secretly hoped. With the unerring instinct of a man who loves deeply, concerning every one except the object of his love, George had read the signs of the times in the face of his old enemy, and distrusted her increasing benignity. She, at least, had come to the conclusion that Constance would not marry him, and seeing that the necessity for destruction was decreasing, she allowed the sun of her smiles to penetrate the dark storm-clouds of her sullen anger. George would have preferred any convulsion of the elements to this threatened calm.

Constance Fearing was in great distress of mind. She had not forgotten the date, nor had she any intention of letting it pass without fulfilling her engagement and giving George the definite answer he had so patiently expected. The difficulty was, to know what that answer should be. Her indecision could not be ascribed to her indolence in studying the question. It had been constantly before her, demanding immediate solution and tormenting her with its difficulties throughout many long months. Her conscientious love of truth had forced her to examine it much more closely than she would have chosen to do had she yielded to her inclinations. Her own happiness was no doubt vitally concerned, but the consideration of absolute loyalty and honesty must be first and before all things. The tremendous importance of the conclusion now daily more imminent appalled her and frightened her out of her simplicity into the mazes of a vicious logic; and she found the labyrinth of her difficulties further complicated in that its ways were intersected by the by-paths of her religious meditations. When her reason began to grow clear, she suddenly found it opposed to some one of a set of infallible rules by which she had undertaken to guide her whole existence. To-day she prayed to heaven, and grace was given her to marry George. To-morrow she would examine her heart and ascertain that she could never love him as he deserved. Could she marry him when he was to give so much and she had so little to offer? That would be manifestly wrong; but in that case why had her

prayer seemed to be answered so distinctly by an impulse from the heart? She was evidently not in a state of grace, since she was inspired to do what was wrong. Selfishness must be at the bottom of it, and selfishness, as it was the sin about which she knew most, was the one within her comprehension which she the most sincerely abhorred. But if her impulse to marry George was selfish, was it not the direct utterance of her heart, and might this not be the only case in life in which she might frankly follow her own wishes? George loved her most truly. If she felt that she wished to marry him, was it not because she loved him? There was the point, again, confronting her just where she had begun the round of self-torture. Did she love him? What was the test of true love? Would she die for him? Dying for people was theatrical and out of fashion, as she had often been told. It was much more noble to live for those one loved than to die for them. Could she live for George? What did the words mean? Had she not lived for him, said her heart, during the last year, if not longer? What nonsense, exclaimed her reason, as if giving a little encouragement and a great deal of advice could be called living for a man! It meant more than that; it meant so much to her that she felt sure she could never accomplish it. Therefore she did not love him, and it must all come to an end at once.

She reproached herself bitterly for her weakness that had lasted so long. She was a mere flirt, a heartless girl, who had ruined a man's life and happiness recklessly, because she did not know her own mind. She would be brave now, at last, before it was quite too late. She would confess her fault and tell him how despicable she thought herself, how she repented of her evil ways, how she would be his best and firmest friend, his sister, anything that she could be to him, except his wife. He would be hurt, pained, heartbroken for a while, but he would see how much better it had been to speak the truth.

But, in the midst of her passionate self-accusation, the thought of her own state after she should have put him away for ever presented itself with painful distinctness. Whether she loved him or not, he was a part of her life, and she felt that she could not do without him. For one moment she allowed herself to think of his face if she told him that she consented to their union at last; she could see the happy smiles he loved so well and hear the vibrating tones of the voice that moved her more than other voices. Then, to her inexpressible shame, there arose before her visions of another kind, and notably the face of Johnson, the hard-

working critic. All at once George seemed to be surrounded by a host of people whom she did not know, and whom she did not want to know; men whom, as she remembered to have thought before, she would not have wished to see at her table, yet friends of his, faithful friends—Johnson was one at least—to whom he owed much, and whom he would not allow to slip out of his existence because he had married Constance Fearing. She blushed scarlet, though she was alone, and passionate tears of anger at herself burst from her eyes. To think of that miserable consideration, she must be the most contemptible of women. Truly, the baseness of the human heart was unfathomable and shoreless as the ocean of space itself! Truly, she did not love him if she could think such thoughts, and she must tell him so, cost what it might.

The last night came, preceding the day when she had promised to give him her decisive answer. She had written him a word to say that he was expected, and she sat down in her own room to fight the struggle over again for the last time. The morrow was to decide, she thought, and yet it was impossible to come to any conclusion. Why had she not set the period at two years instead of one? Surely, in twelve months more she would have known her own mind, or at least have seen what course to pursue. Step by step she advanced once more into the sea of her difficulties, striving to keep her intelligence free from prejudice, and yet hoping that her heart would speak clearly. But it was of no use, the labyrinth was more confused than ever, the light less, and her strength more unsteady. If she thought, it seemed as though her thoughts would drive her mad; if she prayed, her prayers were confused and senseless.

‘I cannot marry him, I cannot, I cannot!’ she cried at last, utterly worn out with fatigue and anxiety.

She threw herself upon her pillows and tried to rest, while her own words still rang in her ears. She slept a little and she uttered the same cry in her sleep. By force of conscious and unconscious repetition of the phrase, it became mechanised and imposed itself upon her will. When the morning broke she knew that she had resolved not to marry George Wood, and that her resolution was irrevocable.

To tell him so was a very different matter. She grew cold as she thought of the scene that was before her, and became conscious that her nerves were not equal to such a strain. She fancied that the decision she had reached had been the result of her strength in

her struggle with herself. In reality she had succumbed to her own weakness and had abandoned the contest, feeling that it was easier to do anything negative rather than to commit herself to a bondage from which she might some day wish to escape when it should be too late. With a little more firmness of character she would have been able to shake off her doubts and to see that she really loved George very sincerely, and that to hesitate was to sacrifice everything to a morbid fear of offending her now over-delicate conscience. Even now, if she could have known herself, she would have realised that she had by no means given up all love for the man who loved her, nor all expectation of ultimately becoming his wife. She would have behaved very differently if she had been sure that she was burning her ships and cutting off all possibility of a return, or if she had known the character of the man with whom she had to deal. She had passed through a sort of nervous crisis, and her resolution was in the main a concession to her desire to gain time. In making it she had thrown down her arms and given up the fight. The reaction that followed made it seem impossible for her to face such a scene as must ensue.

At first it struck her that the best way of getting out of the difficulty would be to write to George and tell him her decision in as few words as possible, begging him to come and see her a week later, when she would do her best to explain to him the many and good reasons which had contributed to the present result. This idea, however, she soon abandoned. It would seem most unkind to deal such a blow so suddenly and then expect him to wait so long before enlightening him further upon the subject. Face him herself she could not. She might be weak, she thought, and she was willing to admit it; it was only to add another unworthiness to the long list with which she was ready to accuse herself. She could not, and she would not, tell George herself. The only person who could undertake to bear her message was

She felt very kindly disposed to Grace that morning. There was a satisfaction in feeling that she could think of any one without the necessity of considering the question of her marriage. Besides, Grace had opposed her increasing liking for George from the beginning, and had warned her that she would never marry him. Grace had been quite right, and, as Constance was feeling particularly humble just then, she thought it would be agreeable to her pride if she confessed the superiority of Grace's judgment. She could accuse herself before her sister of all her misdeeds

without the fear of witnessing George's violent grief. Moreover, it would be better for George, too, since he would be obliged to contain himself when speaking to her sister, as he would certainly not control his feelings in an interview with herself. To be short, Constance was willing in that moment to be called a coward, rather than face the man she had wronged. Her courage had failed her altogether, and she was being carried rapidly down stream from one concession to another, while still trying to give an air of rectitude and self-sacrifice to all her actions. She was preparing an abyss of well-merited self-contempt for herself in the future, though her present satisfaction in her release from responsibility had dulled her real sense of right, and had left only the artificialities of her morbid conscience still sensitive to the flattery of imaginary self-sacrifice.

An hour later she was alone with her sister. She had greeted her in an unusually affectionate way on entering the room, and the younger girl immediately felt that something had taken place. She herself was smiling, and cordial in her manner.

'Grace, dearest,' Constance began, after some little hesitation, 'I want to tell you. You have talked so much about Mr. Wood—you know, you have always been afraid that I would marry him, have you not?'

'Not lately,' answered Grace with a pleasant smile.

'Well—do you know? I have thought very seriously of it, and I had decided to give him a definite answer to-day. Do you understand? I have treated him abominably, Grace—oh, I am so sorry! I wish it could all be undone—you were so right!'

'It is not too late,' observed Grace. Then, seeing that there were tears in her sister's eyes, she drew nearer to her, and put her arm round her waist in a comforting way. 'Do not be so unhappy, Conny,' she said, in a tone of deep sympathy. 'Men do not break their hearts nowadays—'

'Oh, but he will, Grace! I am sure he will—and the worst of it is that I must—you know——'

'Not at all, dear. If you like I will break it to him——'

'Oh, Grace, what a darling you are!' cried Constance, throwing both her arms round her sister's neck and kissing her. 'I did not dare to ask you, and I could not, I could not have done it myself! But you will do it very kindly, will you not? You know he has been so good and patient.'

There was an odd smile on Grace's strong face when she

answered, but Constance was not in a mood to notice anything disagreeable just then.

'I will break it to him very gently,' said the young girl quietly. 'Of course you must tell me what I am to say, more or less—an idea, you know. I cannot say bluntly that you have sent word that you have decided not to marry him, can I?'

'Oh no!' exclaimed Constance, suddenly growing very grave. 'You must tell him that I feel towards him just as I always did——'

'Is that true?'

'Of course. I always told him that I did not love him enough to marry him. You may as well know it all. A year ago, he proposed again—well, yes, it was not the first time. I told him that if on the first of May—this first of May—I loved him better than I did then, I would marry him. Well, I have thought about it, again and again, all the time, and I am sure I do not love him as I ought, if I were to marry him.'

'I should think not,' laughed Grace, 'if it is so hard to find it out!'

'Oh, you must not laugh at me,' said Constance earnestly. 'It is very, very serious. Have I done right, Grace? I wish I knew! I have treated him so cruelly, so hatefully, and yet I did not mean to. I am so fond of him, I admire him so much, I like his ways—and all—I do still, you know. It is quite true. I suppose I ought to be ashamed of it—only, I am sure I never did love him, really.'

'I have no idea of laughing at the affair,' answered Grace.

'It is serious enough, I am sure, especially for him.'

'Yes—I want to make a confession to you. I want to tell you that you were quite right, that I have encouraged him and led him on, and been dreadfully unkind. I am sure you think I am a mere flirt, and perfectly heartless! Is it not true? Well, I am, and it is of no use to deny it. I will never, never, do such a thing again—never! But, after all, I do like him very much. I never could understand why you hated him so, from the first.'

'I did not hate him. I do not hate him now,' said Grace emphatically. 'I did hate the idea of his marrying you, and I do still. I thought it was just as well that he should see that from the way one member of the family behaved towards him.'

'He did see it!' exclaimed Constance, in a tone of regret.

'It is another of the things I inflicted on him.'

'You? I should rather think it was I——'

'No, it was all my fault, all, everything, from beginning to end—and you are a darling, Gracey dear, and it is so sweet of you! You will be very good to him? Yes—and if he should want to see me very much, after you have told him everything, I might come down for a minute. I should so much like to be sure that he has taken it kindly.'

'If you wish it, you might see him, but I hardly think—well, do as you think best, dear.'

'Thank you, darling—you know you really are a darling, though I do not always tell you so. And now, I think I will go and lie down. I never slept last night.'

'Silly child!' laughed Grace, kissing her on both cheeks. 'As though it mattered so much, after all.'

'Oh, but it does matter,' Constance said regretfully, as she left the room.

When Grace Fearing was alone she went to the window and looked out thoughtfully into the fresh morning air.

'I am very glad,' she said aloud to herself. 'I am very, very glad. But I would not have done it. No, not for worlds! I would rather have cut off my right hand than treat a man like that!'

In that moment she pitied George Wood with all her heart.

(*To be continued.*)

The Ballad of Sir Hugh.

THE castle had been held in siege
 While thrice three weeks went past
 And still the foe no 'vantage gained,
 And still our men stood fast.

We held the castle for our King
 Against our foes and his ;
 Stout was our heart, as man's must be
 In such brave cause as this.

Sir Hugh he walked his castle wall,
 And oh ! his heart was sore,
 For the foe held fast the only son
 His dead wife ever bore.

The castle gates were firm and fast,
 Strong was the castle wall,
 Yet bore Sir Hugh an aching heart
 For the thing that might befall.

He looked out to the pearly east
 Ere day began to break ;
 'God save my boy till evensong,'
 He said, 'for Mary's sake !'

He looked out on the western sky
 When the sun sank, blood-red ;
 'God keep the child till morning light,
 For Christ his sake,' he said.

And morn and eve and noon and night
 His heart one prayer did make :
 'God keep my boy, my little son,
 For his dear dead mother's sake !'

At last, worn out with bootless siege,
Our walls being tall and stout,
The rebel captain neared our gates
With a flag of truce held out.

‘A word, Sir Hugh, a word with you
Ere yet it be too late.
We have a prisoner, and would know
What is to be his fate.

‘Yield up the castle or he dies !
’Tis thus the bargain stands :
His body in our hands we hold,
His life is in your hands !’

Sir Hugh looked down, across the moat,
And in the sunlight fair
He saw the child’s blue frightened eyes
And tangled golden hair.

He saw the little arms held out,
The little voice rang thin :
‘O father dear, undo the gates !
O father, let me in !’

Sir Hugh leaned on the battlement,
His voice rang strong and true :
‘My son, I cannot let thee in
As my heart bids me do ;

‘For honour and our King command,
And we must needs obey ;
So bear thee as a brave man’s son,
As I will do this day.

‘If I should open and let thee in,
I let in, with thee, shame ;
And that thing never shall be done
By one who bears our name !’

The boy looked up, his shoulders squared,
Threw back his bright blond hair :
‘Father, I will not be the one
To shame the name we bear !

THE BALLAD OF SIR HUGH.

'And whatsoever they may do,
Whether I live or die,
I'll bear me as a brave man's son,
For that, thank God, am I!'

Then spake Sir Hugh unto the foe—
He spake full fierce and free :
'Ye cowards, think ye ye have affair
With cowards, such as ye be ?

'What ? I must yield my castle up,
For fear my son be slain ?
I trow ye never had to do
Till now, with honest men !

'Tis but by traitors such as you
That such base deeds be done.
Not to betray his King and cause
Did I beget my son !

'My son was bred that he might fight,
And hew down knaves like you ;
Or—at the least—die like a man,
As he this day will do !

'And, since ye lack a weapon meet
To take so good a life—
For your coward steel would stain his blood—
Here, take his father's knife !'

With that he flung his long knife down
From off the castle wall ;
It glimmered and gleamed in the brave sunlight,
Full in the sight of all.

Sir Hugh passed down the turret-stair---
We held our breath in awe. . . .
May my tongue wither, ere it tell
The damnèd work we saw !

.
.

When all was done, a shout went up
From that accursèd crew,
And from the chapel's silence dim
Came forth in haste Sir Hugh.

'Now what may mean this clamour and din?'
'Thy son, Sir Hugh, is dead!'
'I deemed the foe had entered in,
But God is good!' he said.

We stood upon the topmost tower
Full in the setting sun;
Shamed silence grew in the traitors' camp
Now that foul deed was done.

See! on the hills the gleam of steel,
Hark! threatening clarions ring!
See! horse and foot and spear and shield
And the banner of the King!

And in the camp of those without
Hot tumult and cold fear—
For the traitor only dares be brave
Until his King be near!

We armed at speed and sallied forth.
Sir Hugh was at our head;
He set his teeth, and he marked his path
By a line of traitors, dead.

He hacked his way straight to the churl
Who did the boy to death;
He swung his sword in his two strong hands,
And clove him to the teeth.

And while his steel was held there fast,
The caitiffs round him pressed,
And he died, as one of his line should die,
With three blades in his breast.

And when they told the King these things
He turned his head away,
And said, 'A braver man than I
Has fallen for me this day!'

At the Sign of the Ship.

CRITICS AND CRITICISED.

NOVELISTS are still complaining, in the decent obscurity of the *Author*, that they are not well treated by reviewers. Mr. Lewis Morris, also, in *Murray's Magazine*, talks of critics, or of some critics, in a dissatisfied tone. They are :

'A mischievous crew, who, whenever a book of verse appears, are always ready to crush it with vulgar insults or unmerited neglect, and for the most part succeed.' Mr. Morris's own poems, assuredly, have not been crushed—far from it—so this is no mere personal wail. Again, critics, or rather some critics, are 'second-hand superior persons from Grub Street or Wall Street' (in New York City, but why?) 'with a nodding acquaintance with the Latin Grammar.' Also, the poet has to endure 'the grotesque ill-will of foul-mouthed Thersites, and Tom Fool belabouring his betters' with his professional weapon. Yet again we hear of 'latter-day critics larding their ill-nature with scraps of booksellers' French, stale and yet raw.' That which is stale will serve but poorly as lard, and what is 'booksellers' French?' Is it to be found in catalogues, is it *veau fauve, non rogné, épuisé, mar. rouge*, terms in booksellers' French which it would be difficult to lard ill-nature with? These are mysteries, but clearly Mr. Morris is ill content. The novelists mainly regret that they are noticed in batches of six or eight, while essays and histories often get a separate review. But novelists, who, by the way, do not always grumble in grammar, should remember that they are very numerous. Each week does not produce eight histories, or even eight volumes of essays, but eight novels are a not unusual harvest, perhaps sixteen new novels to the week is the common average. Of the yearly eight hundred, perhaps ten are really excellent. Were I an editor (*unberufen!*), methinks I would give the good novels a separate article, and even, perhaps, extend the privilege of an exclusive pillory to very bad novels by very

well-known hands. Whether this would make the well-known but erring hands happier is another question. But novelists must remember that, if only one column apiece were given to each novel, the whole paper would not contain what must be written on a topic of the scantiest public interest.

* * *

As a being who has been a good deal reviewed, I must confess that I generally think I know a good deal more of my own topic than the critics know. Moreover, I do not believe that they have ever quite shown such a good opinion of my deathless works as I myself entertain. Dr. Johnson only once had what he called his bellyful of wall fruit, and I do not know that I ever had my whack of praise. And, even if I got it, I would think the reviewer an indiscriminate person. Frankly, I cannot conceive such a thing as a review really satisfactory to an author. We should remember this, and be lenient to reviewers when they are kindly. When they are not kindly, one feels like the French gentleman who cheated at cards. 'It is true I cheat, but I do not love to be told it,' said this philosopher. Nor does one love to be told that one is careless, or feeble, or tedious, or flippant, or vulgar, though, goodness knows, it may all be true enough. So really to be satisfied with one's critics is not in nature.

* * *

Mr. Lewis Morris, very genially to be sure, and without naming names, finds that some writers of verse are prolix; that others (like my Lord Tennyson) have selected provincial subjects, or, like Milton, subjects devoid of human interest. But in Milton's time salvation was really thought a matter of very considerable moment, and Creation interested him as much as Evolution can interest anybody now. Then Mr. Lewis Morris holds that some modern poets who write dramas after the Greek model are pedantic, that others are prolix, and others, as Mr. Browning and Mr. Rossetti, are obscure, while others dally with *ballades* and *trioletts*. *Mea culpa, mea maxima culpa!* But I never thought it was poetry, and I won't do it again. Thus, perhaps, if we venture to put names to the modern offenders, we find—let us have a tabular form—that modern poets may be arranged thus:—

Lord TENNYSON.	.	.	Provincial in subject.
Mr. SWINBURNE	}	.	? Pedantic.
Mr. BRIDGES			
Mr. WILLIAM MORRIS.	.	.	Prolix.

Mr. ROSSETTI	}	.	.	Obscure.
Mr. BROWNING				
TOM	}	.	.	F frivolous.
DICK				
HARRY				
		.	.	Frenchified.

Possibly the names are not always correctly supplied: that is the worst of the allusive style, where you write *at* people. No doubt Mr. Lewis Morris also recognises the merits of some of the authors criticised, however it may fare with Thomas, Richard, and Henry. As to Lord Tennyson, I, for one, cannot regard the Arthurian legends as 'provincial.' If one had to address any reproach to the Laureate, it would be in the words of Virgil to Horace, in the *Dialogues des Morts*, by Messire François de Salignac de la Motte-Fénelon, 'il y a des choses que je croirois un peu trop tournées.' But perhaps this is 'a scrap of booksellers' French, stale yet raw.' Concerning such plays as *Erechtheus*, are we to call them pedantic? That is for every man's own taste to decide. That Mr. Rossetti is not always very clear, that Mr. Browning is not constantly lucid, we may agree, and there is a good deal of Mr. William Morris. As for Henry, Richard, and Thomas, *autant en emporte le vent!* But, surely, here be criticisms by Mr. Lewis Morris not absolutely laudatory. Shall we, then, call him by the names which he freely confers on other critics? Assuredly not: he has his own idea of how poetry should be written, he does not approve wholly of the other gentlemen, and candidly says so. But then we have all a right to do as much, and putting Mr. Lewis Morris, as a minstrel, in a class by himself, let us leave the public to affix its own epithets.

Mr. LEWIS MORRIS. . . .

No one will call him obscure, or pedantic, very much less will they reproach this author with frivolity. But it is certain that human beings, however great their merits, must have some defect, and certain that they do not love to hear of it. The Roman general, in his triumph, must have detested the slave who whispered, 'Thou art mortal,' and critics, who inherit the duty of the slave, must expect to be unpopular. Ah, Thersites and Margites, if one only knew your real names and addresses, how one would pay you out! But you are safe, envious slanderers, in your anonymous lurking-places; and, besides, there is always the risk of rushing out and revenging oneself on the wrong lady or gentleman.

THE COMPLETE BUNGLER.

SCENE I.

HAMPSHIRE.

PISCATOR ANGLUS. (*Fin de Siècle.*) PISCATOR SCOTUS.

Scotus.—Well, now let's go to your sport of angling. Where, Master, is your river?

Anglus.—Marry, 'tis here; mark you, this is the famous Test.

Scotus.—What, Master, this dry ditch? There be scarce three inches of water in it.

Anglus.—Patience, Scholar, the water is in the meadows, or Master Oakley, the miller, is holding it up. Nay, let us wait here some hour or so till the water is turned on. Or perchance, Scholar, for the matter of five shillings, Master Oakley will even raise his hatches, an you have a crown about you.

Scotus.—I like not to part with my substance, but, as needs must, here, Master, is the coin you hint at.

[*Exit ANGLUS to the Mill. He returns.*]

Anglus.—Now, Scholar, said I not so? The water is turned on again, and, lo you, at the tail of yonder stream, a fair trout is rising. You shall see a touch of our craft.

[*ANGLUS crawls on his belly into a tuft of nettles, where he kneels and flicks his fly for about ten minutes.*]

Anglus.—Alas, he has ceased rising, and I am grievously entangled in these nettles. Come, Scholar, but warily, lest ye fright my fish, and now disentangle my hook.

Scotus.—Here is your hook, but, marry, my fingers tingle shrewdly with the nettles; also I marked the fish hasting up stream.

Anglus.—Nay, come, we shall even look for another.

Scotus.—Oh, Master, what is this? That which but now was dry ditch is presently salad bowl! Mark you how the green vegetables cover the waters! We shall have no sport.

Anglus.—Patience, Scholar; 'tis but Master Hedgely's men, cutting the weeds above. We may rest us some hour or two, till they go by. Or, perchance, for a matter of five shillings—

Scotus.—Nay, Master, this English angling is over costly. The rent of your ditch is high, the expenses of travel are ruinous.

In crawling through your nettles and thistles I have scratched my face, and torn my raiment, and I may not pay the labourer to cease labouring in his industry.

Anglus.—Why then, *pazienza*, Scholar, or listen while I sing that sweet ditty of country contentment and an angler's life, writ by worthy Master Hackle long ago.

SONG.

The Angler hath a jolly life
 Who by the rail runs down,
 And leaves his business and his wife,
 And all the din of town.
 The wind down stream is blowing straight,
 And nowhere cast can he ;
 Then lo, he doth but sit and wait
 In kindly company.

Or else they turn the water off,
 Or folk be cutting weed,
 While he doth at misfortune scoff,
 From every trouble freed.
 Or else he waiteth for a rise,
 And ne'er a rise may see ;
 For why, there are not any flies
 To bear him company

Or, if he mark a rising trout,
 He straightway is caught up,
 And then he takes his flasket out,
 And drinks a rousing cup.
 Or if a trout he chance to hook,
 Weeded and broke is he,
 And then he finds a godly book
 Instructive company.

What think you of my song, Scholar? 'Tis choicely musical. What, he is gone! A pest on those Northerners; they have no manners. Now, methinks I do remember a trout called George, a heavy fellow that lies ever under the arch of yonder bridge, where there is shelter from the wind. Ho for George!

[*Exit singing.*]

SCENE II.

A BRIDGE.

Enter ANGLUS.

Anglus.—Now to creep like your Indian of Virginia on the prey, and angle for George. I'faith, he is a lusty trout; many a good Wickham have I lost in George.

[He ensconces himself in the middle of a thorn bush.]

Anglus.—There he is, I mark his big back fin. Now speed me, St. Peter, patron of all honest anglers! But first, to dry my fly!

[He flicks his fly for ten minutes. Enter BOY on Bridge. ANGLUS makes his cast, too short. BOY heaves a great stone from the Bridge. Exit GEORGE. Exit BOY.]

Anglus.—Oh, Mass! verily the angler hath need of patience! That boy hath spoiled my sport, and were it not that swearing frights the fish, I could find it in my heart to say an oath or twain. But, ha, here come the swallows, hawking low on the stream. Now, were but my Scholar here, I could impart to him much honest lore concerning the swallow, and other birds. But where she hawks, there fly must be, and fish will rise, and, look you, I do mark the trout feeding in yonder ford below the plank bridge.

[ANGLUS steals off, and gingerly takes up his position.]

Anglus.—Marry, that is a good trout under the burdock!

[He is caught up in the burdock, and breaks his tackle.]

Anglus.—Now to knot a fresh cast. Marry, but they are feeding gaily! How kindly is the angler's life; he harmeth no fish that swims, yet the *Spectator* deemeth ours a cruel sport. Ah, good Master Townsend and learned Master Hutton, little ye wot of our country contents. So, I am ready again, and this Whitechurch dun will beguile yonder fish, I doubt not. Marry, how thick the flies come, and how the fish do revel in this merciful provender that Heaven sendeth! Verily I know not at which of these great fellows to make my essay.

[Enter thirty-four callow young ducks, swimming up stream. The ducks chevy the flies, taking them out of the very mouths of the trout.]

Anglus.—Oh, mercy. I have hooked a young duck! Where is my landing-net? Nay, I have left it under yonder elm!

[*He struggles with the young duck. By the conclusion of the fray the Rise is over.*]

Anglus.—I have saved my fly, but lo, the trout have ceased to feed, and will rise no more till after sunset. Well, 'a merry heart goes all the way!' And lo, here comes my Scholar. Ho, runaway, how have you sped?

Scotus.—Not ill. Here be my spoils, great ones; but how faint-hearted are your southern trout!

Anglus.—That fat fellow is a good three pounds by the scales. But, Scholar, with what fly caught ye these, and where?

Scotus.—Marry, Master, in a Mill-tail, where the water lagged not, but ran free; nor with no fly, but with an artificial penk, or minnow. It was made by a handsome woman that had a fine hand, and wrought for Master Brown, of Aberdeen. The mould, or body of the minnow, is of parchment, methinks, and he hath fins of copper, all so curiously dissembled that it will beguile any sharp-sighted trout in a swift stream. Men call it a Phantom, Master; wilt thou not try my Phantom?

Anglus.—Begone, sirrah. I took thee for an angler, and thou art but a poaching knave!

Scotus.—Knave thyself! I will break thy head!

Anglus.—Softly, Scholar. Here comes good Master Hedgely, who will see fair play. Now lie there, my coat, and have at you!

[*They fight. SCOTUS is knocked down.*]

Anglus.—Half-minute time! Time is up! Master Hedgely, in my dry fly box thou wilt find a little sponge for moistening of my casting lines. Wilt thou, of thy courtesy, throw it up for my Scholar? And now, Scholar, trust me, thy guard is too low. I hope thou bearest no malice.

Scotus.—None, Master. But, lo! I am an hungered; wilt thou taste my cates? Here I have bread slices and marmalade of Dundee. This fishing is marvellous hungry work.

Anglus.—Gladly will I fall to, but first say me a grace—*Benedictus benedicat!* Where is thine usquebaugh? Marry, 'tis the right Talisker!

Scotus.—And now, Master, wherefore wert thou wroth with me? Came we not forth to catch fish?

Anglus.—Nay, marry, Scholar, but to fish with the dry fly.

Now this, humanly speaking, is impossible; natheless it is rare sport. But for your fish, as they were ill come by, let us even give them to good Master Hedgely here, and so be merry till the sedges come on in the late twilight. And, trust me, this is the rarest fishing, and the peacefulest; only see that thou fish not with the wet fly, for that is Anathema. So shall we have light consciences.

Scotus.—And light baskets!

Anglus.—Ay, it may be so.

* * *

If ever there was a work of art which exactly 'filled the bill' it is Mr. Grant Allen's *What's Bred in the Bone*.¹ This narrative obtained the prize of 1,000*l.*, offered by the spirited proprietor of *Tit-Bits*, and it richly deserved that guerdon. Mr. Grant Allen has proved that he can be the Montépin of English romance, as, no doubt, he could be the Bourget, or the Ohnet, or the Gyp, or the Howells, if he chose. *What's Bred in the Bone* is what you can recommend to a friend, to a friend who, like Mr. Thackeray, likes his novels hot and strong, which is my own taste. Having come down to the country expressly to read the *Meletemata* of the learned Nitzsch, I unwarily purchased *What's Bred*, &c. What's Nitzsch, I ask, compared to such a rival? Here is everything that fiction (for *Tit-Bits*) should have. It was a pity to waste the villain so early, but, even when throttled, he did a great deal of mischief. Then the Q.C.! What one likes (to quote M. de Montépin) is his *nature primesautière*. In the spring a Q.C.'s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of crime. There is an inconvenient entry in a parish register, and he means to cut it out (p. 204). It is usually Baronets who do this, not knowing that copies are kept—at the Registry Office, I think. A Q.C. would have known, but not a reader of *Tit-Bits*. Then, when he has committed an accidental homicide, what would a Q.C. do? Give himself up to justice? Not at all; hide the body in a dell, on the other hand, in accordance with the best authorities. Even the printer has had a lucky stroke; he talks of a man's 'stentorous breathing.' The voice of Stentor was loud; about his breathing we know little. But these are trifles. This is an excellent novel. The hereditary snake dance with the boa (not constrictor) is perfectly delightful and original. The Twins, more or less Corsican, are admirable. Then the villain is

¹ *Tit-Bits* Office.

not a minor poet, as usual, but a musician, which is really more probable; and it is high time that the minor poets had a holiday, or were even promoted to the rank of hero. To judge by the language of some haughty critics, one might think that to write a novel of this kind is an easy thing, which any one can do. But it is, perhaps, as rare a gift as the composition of the most 'cultured' fiction. The first thing is to *empoigner*, to grip your public, and that is the chief and greatest difficulty. No mere accumulation of crimes will do it; the special narrative genius is wanted, that which holds the student as the Ancient Mariner held the Wedding Guest, with his glittering eye. Criticism should cry in the streets that this is the one thing needful, not analysis, nor culture, nor epigram, nor this, nor that, which is all very well, but only comes into play when the attention is caught, as Mr. Allen catches it, now, as often previously.

ANDREW LANG.

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following amounts. Contributions received after July 11 will be entered in the September number:—

Miss E. Smith, a parcel of socks, &c. Collected by J. D. (Kensington), 5s. Received at St. Katharine's Restaurant, 42A Dock Street, E., during June: Very nice clothing (anonymous); Men's clothes, mended, from Mrs. G. M. L.; Flannel shirts and a suit, from Mr. Townend; Very nice box of clothes, from Mrs. Duret; Men's boots, from A. Bevington.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to

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39 Paternoster Row, London, E.C.